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ABSTRACT

Scholars examine the Afro-American past to understand the position that black people have occupied in U.S. society, their efforts to cope with their status, and their successes and failures in pursuing full equality. The four major themes of Afro-American history and the transformations associated with them are: (1)"Africa to America" (Africans to Afro-Americans); (2)"Slavery to Freedom" (slaves to agricultural workers); (3)"Countryside to City" (agricultural workers to industrial laborers); and (4)"Segregation to Civil Rights" (outsiders to first-class citizens). These four themes offer a conceptual framework for organizing the Afro-American experience thematically and chronologically and for incorporating it in the trajectory of U.S. history. The people, movements, organizations, political and social events, and legislation associated with these themes are discussed in depth. Each of the four sections is supported by extensive notes, and a bibliography of 14 reference guides is included. (JB)

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Teaching Afro-American History

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PREFACE

Most of the research and writing for this pamphlet was completed while I was a fellow at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University in 1983-84. Special thanks to Nathan I. Huggins, Director, the staff, and fellows at the Du Bois Institute for a most congenial atmosphere in which to read, reflect, and write. A postdoctoral fellowship for minority scholars from the Ford Foundation and administered by the National Research Council made my stay at the Du Bois Institute both possible and comfortable. The Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University provided sabbatical leave that allowed for a year of refuge at Harvard, free from teaching and committee responsibilities. James Turner, Director of the Africana Center, has my gratitude for his encouragement and support. And my colleagues in our small department have my appreciation for their willingness to bear even more work in my absence.

Darlene Clark Hine, the driving force behind the Conference on the Study and Teaching of Afro-American History, patiently read formative drafts and shared her rich store of knowledge with me. I acknowledge the confidence of my colleagues on the Conference Advisory Committee—Mikaso Hane, Thomas C. Holt, Alton Hornsby, Jr., Armstead Robinson, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, and Harold D. Woodman—in selecting me to write this work. Noralee Frankel, of the American Historical Association, moved this project forward with gentle persistence. Natalie Tyler helped to shape my prose in a way that will engage the interest of a general audience.

My research assistant at the Du Bois Institute, Deanne Samuels, listened sympathetically as I struggled with the conceptual design for the pamphlet. She cheerfully and efficiently tracked references, as did Benjamin Hardy, who assisted me at the Africana Studies and Research Center. A final note of gratitude to the scholars cited herein, without whose scholarship this work would not have been possible. And to Anita B. whose love and strength sustains my world and whose example has helped Lisa, Leslie, and Lauren appreciate it.

A Conceptual Design for Afro-American History

Transition	*Process*	*Turning Point*	*Watershed*	*Transformation*
Africa to America	Enslavement	American Revolution	1830s	Afro-Americans
Slavery to Freedom	Emancipation	Civil War	1890s	Agricultural Workers
Countryside to City	Urbanization	World War I	1940s	Industrial Laborers
Segregation to Civil Rights	Enfranchisement	*Brown v. Board of Education*	1960s	First-Class Citizens

Teaching Afro-American History

ROBERT L. HARRIS, JR.

This pamphlet grew out of plans for the Conference on the Study and Teaching of Afro-American History, held October 6-8, 1983 at Purdue University. The American Historical Association Teaching Division, with support from the Lilly Endowment, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Purdue University, sponsored the conference. It examined the research, writing, and teaching of Afro-American history as well as its public presentation through museums, film, television, and festivals over the past two decades.

This pamphlet is part of the effort to make recent interpretations of Afro-American history accessible to a broad audience. It has been written to acquaint teachers and students with the implications of scholarship during the last twenty years for better understanding the Afro-American adventure. As a narrative outline, it serves to introduce the subject of Afro-American history, to identify its major themes, and to provide a conceptual framework for exploration in greater depth. The pamphlet presents Afro-American history as a subject in its own right as well as an integral part of American history. It should therefore be useful to teachers and students of both Afro-American and American history.

Afro-American history is the study of the thought and actions of people of African ancestry in the United States over time and place. We examine the Afro-American past to understand the position that black people have occupied in American society, their efforts to cope with their status, and their successes and failures in pursuing full equality. Research and writing about Afro-Americans has shifted from treating them as pawns swept by the course of historical events to appreciating them as actors capable of influencing the direction of historical developments. The writing of Afro-American history has helped to revitalize the discipline of history, to deepen our knowledge of the role that black people have played in the United States, and to shed greater light on the nature of American society.

Four major transitions in Afro-American life help us understand the dynamics of change for black people in America over time and place. The transitions from "Africa to America," "Slavery to Freedom," "Countryside to City," and "Segregation to Civil Rights" offer a conceptual

framework for organizing the Afro-American experience thematically and chronologically and for incorporating it in the trajectory of American history. Each transition had a turning point—the American Revolution, Civil War, World War I, and 1954 Supreme Court Decision—and a watershed—the 1830s, 1890s, 1940s, and 1960s—associated with major changes in American society. Moreover, the processes of enslavement, emancipation, urbanization, and enfranchisement dramatically transformed Afro-American life. Africans became Afro-Americans; slaves, agricultural workers; agricultural workers, industrial laborers; and outsiders, first-class citizens. (See chart)

These transitions and transformations provide themes for the study of both Afro-American and American history. Did prejudice cause slavery or did slavery cause prejudice? What was the manner of acculturation for Africans in America? How did slave resistance in America differ from that in other slave societies in the New World?

To what extent did slavery produce the image of "Sambo," a childlike, docile, lazy, and dependent creature? What were the lineaments of Afro-American culture as developed during slavery? What effect has Afro-American culture had on American culture? How did the freedmen define freedom? When did racial segregation crystallize in the South?

Did black migration north result from the push of the South or the pull of the North? What were the origins of the urban ghetto? Was the New Deal more of a help or a hindrance for Afro-Americans? What effect did World War II have on Afro-American resolve to achieve first-class citizenship?

What was the relationship between the civil rights movement and decolonization after World War II? What were the origins of the modern civil rights movement? What effect did the civil rights movement have on Afro-Americans North and South? And on American society? To what extent is race or class the major influence on Afro-American socio-economic status?

These themes among others inform our understanding of the internal dimensions of the Afro-American story as well as its relation to the American saga. The conceptualization of Afro-American history offered here emphasizes the broad sweep of black people's struggle for freedom and equality. It furnishes a context for better appreciating individual accomplishment, achievement, and contribution to American life. It is hoped that readers of this pamphlet, both teachers and students from secondary school through college, will derive a perspective for interpreting continuity and change for Afro-Americans over time and place in the United States.

AFRICA TO AMERICA

The forced migration of some 400,000 Africans to North America between 1619 and 1808 permanently altered their lives and status and profoundly influenced the development of American society. Several factors contributed to the evolution of African enslavement. Moreover, the process of acculturation and the growth of racist ideologies and practices shaped the transformation of Africans into Afro-Americans. Economic needs, increased demands for labor, and demographic pressures such as sexual balance and the ratio of Africans to white colonists were among the many variables that framed the contours of the African presence in America.[1] By the 1830s, however, the disparate groups from Africa had become Afro-Americans both culturally and ideologically.

Long before that fateful day in August 1619, when a Dutch ship landed some twenty Africans at Jamestown, Virginia, Africans had already made contact with the New World. Linguistic, archaeological and anthropological evidence, oral tradition, and written material suggest that they crossed the Atlantic Ocean during the fourteenth century, long before Christopher Columbus. Inhabitants of the island that he named Hispaniola told Columbus about Africans who traded them gold. In Mexico, Balboa encountered an African settlement in 1513 called Darien. The discovery of small statues and huge granite heads representing Africans in Mexico augment personal accounts of an early African presence there.[2] Leo Wiener, a Harvard philologist concluded in his three-volume study that "the two civilizations (Mexican and Mandigan) are not merely similar, —they are identical, in concept, in form, in ritualistic observances, in nomenclature, and in Arabic origin of terms employed. The matter of chance is mathematically excluded."[3]

Ivan Van Sertima has recounted an expedition to the New World during the reign of Abubakari II (1305-11) of Mali. Questions remain about the size of the pre-Columbian African presence in the New World and the extent to which commerce was regular or sporadic. We do know, however, that West Africans had the expertise to navigate the equatorial current that forms an ocean highway from the Senegal River to the Caribbean and gulf stream that returns from Florida to North Africa.[4] Moreover, West African societies were sufficiently advanced politically, intellectually, and commercially for that type of venture. Mali, for example, emerged as an empire in West Africa during the early thirteenth century. It encompassed an area comparable in size to Western Europe, extending from the Atlantic east to the Niger River, north to the Senegal River, and south to the Volta River. The Mali Empire included the gold-mining region of West Africa which was Europe's major source of the precious metal before discovery of

the New World. Under the rule of Mansa Musa (c. 1312-37), Mali achieved international prominence with reports of its fabulous wealth and renowned university at Timbuktu. The Catalan Atlas, printed in Europe in 1375, featured the King of Mali on his throne with a huge nugget of gold in his hand.[5]

It was the search for gold as well as the desire to regain the Holy Lands from the Arabs that propelled Europeans, especially the Portuguese, on voyages of discovery. Although Europe knew less about Africa at this juncture, it is ironic that the term "dark Africa" as a mysterious and forbidding place came into vogue in the nineteenth century when Europe became better informed.[6] The Portuguese made direct contact with Africans in 1441. Their explorations began in 1415 when Prince Henry the Navigator started voyages along the northwest coast of Africa. They were the first Europeans to capture and enslave Africans, although it would take a hundred years before the slave trade became a major feature of Portuguese commerce. Southern Europeans historically had traded with Arabs for gold and slaves, but the latter were only a minor part of the exchange. With European settlement of the New World, the Portuguese dominated the slave trade until replaced by the Dutch, French, and finally the British. Before 1600, only about 125,000 Africans were taken to the New World, primarily to the Caribbean, Central America, and Brazil.[7]

The massive forced migration of Africans to the New World began in the seventeenth century with the rise of sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil. Use of African labor took root more slowly in the British North American colonies. Initially, the American colonies had sufficient labor to meet their needs. Differences in settlement patterns also affected the development of slavery. For the most part, North American colonists left Europe to establish their homes in the New World. European adventurers who settled in the Caribbean and Brazil, however, sought to become rich quick and to return home. When the American colonists did seek a larger labor supply to develop their lands, they turned first to white indentured servants. They tended to cost less than slaves, knew the English language, and possessed useful skills. As the colonies matured, the high mortality rate that claimed the lives of almost half the settlers during their first five years declined. With a rise in life expectancy and a drop in the supply of potential servants by 1660, slaves became a more sound investment.[8]

Most Africans who entered the American colonies during the seventeenth century were probably slaves.[9] But slavery in the seventeenth century differed dramatically from slavery in the eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. Moreover, there were variations throughout the colonies. For purposes of comparison, there were the northern (New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), Chesapeake (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia), and low country (the Carolinas and

Georgia) colonies. Prior to the 1660s, the small number of Africans in the colonies reportedly enjoyed a status similar to that of indentured servants. The British, unlike the Spanish and Portuguese, lacked a legal and social tradition for managing slavery. Some Africans therefore became free through petition, self-purchase, or a faithful term of service, much like indentured servants. In Northampton County, Virginia, for example, almost 30 percent of the Africans were free by the 1660s.[10] And they interacted with white colonists on a plane of relative equality for almost two generations.[11]

Until the late seventeenth century, the British West Indies supplied most slaves to the American colonies.[12] Africans from the Caribbean had experienced some "seasoning," that is, acclimation to slave status and introduction to the English language. By the late seventeenth century, however, slave traders began transporting Africans directly from the West African coast to North America. With an increase in the numbers of "unseasoned" Africans, the colonists almost uniformly adopted laws defining and regulating the institution of slavery. They feared potential disruption and violence from this "strange" population. In Massachusetts, the colonists passed legislation that distinguished Africans from white inhabitants and that subjected them to greater social control.[13] Virginians also became anxious about their growing African population and enacted laws to differentiate blacks from whites.[14] Historians still debate the extent to which these actions generated discrimination or brought it to the surface. Did racial prejudice cause African enslavement? Or did slavery educe racial prejudice? To what extent did racial prejudice and slavery interact to debase an entire race?

Some scholars have suggested that the British colonists arrived in North America with preconceptions of African inferiority.[15] It appears, however, that the growth and practice of early discrimination against Africans was based more on class and religious than racial differences. Large landowners in Virginia, for instance, developed the plantation system of agriculture with the labor of white indentured servants. Africans, according to Oscar and Mary Handlin's perceptive observation, entered "...a society in which a large part of the population was to some degree unfree...."[16] Planters looked upon Africans in much the same way as they saw white indentured servants, i.e., as a source of labor. The major difference was that servants worked for definite terms, usually three to seven years. Once free, though, servants had limited social mobility and soon became a restless and dangerous class for the planters. Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 demonstrated the potential for disruption by landhungry white men. Virginia planters, therefore, relied increasingly on a class of workers that could be isolated from the rest of society by the color of their skin.[17] African slaves would not threaten the social and economic order because they could be easily identified and kept subordinate. Economic conditions more than racial bias triggered a process that entrapped Africans in a web of enslavement and denigration.

Similar conditions prevailed in the northern colonies but stemmed more from an interrupted supply of labor than from competition for land. Northern dependence on African labor grew out of reductions in European immigration during the wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. African population growth in the northern colonies peaked by the 1720s. During the mid-eighteenth century, slavery faded in social and economic importance in the northern colonies, became entrenched in the Chesapeake, and flourished in the low country.[18]

Slaves in the seventeenth century lived primarily in a frontier society as the American colonists established themselves on the land. In the northern colonies, they tended livestock and cultivated food crops for export to the Caribbean. They kept the emergent northern cities moving as teamsters, dock workers, and sailors. Except in the cities, slaves had little opportunity to develop a sense of community with fellow Africans.[19] For the most part, isolation and loneliness characterized their lives in the northern and Chesapeake colonies during the seventeenth century. They were not as highly concentrated, especially in the Chesapeake, as they would become during the eighteenth century. Slaves had less chance for social contact, personal relations, and family life among themselves.[20]

By 1680, there were approximately 4,600 slaves in Maryland and Virginia. About 5.4 percent of the Africans reaching Virginia between 1710 and 1718 died before they were ever sold. Many others perished before completing a year there, often from respiratory ailments in the winter and spring. Not until 1740 did the slave population begin to expand from natural increase. African women, brought directly from the West African coast to the Chesapeake, were so severely malnourished after the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean that they generally could not conceive or bring a pregnancy to full term. They usually began families later and had fewer children than creole women (born in the colonies).[21]

In South Carolina, slaves worked on the frontier as herdsmen, lumbermen, and producers of naval stores (pitch, tar, rosin, and turpentine). Their numbers increased dramatically after the 1690s when rice cultivation became the major colonial enterprise. According to Peter Wood, many of the Africans transported to South Carolina had cultivated rice in their homelands. And the methods used to raise rice came from their expertise rather than from the planters' management techniques. Moreover, the sickle-cell trait that West Africans acquired over generations to withstand malaria provided them with some immunity from the disease. Because white settlers suffered higher rates of affliction from malaria than Africans in the low country, slaves worked rice plantations with less direct white supervision than on Chesapeake tobacco plantations. Low country slaves enjoyed greater control of their daily lives, as the

planter class usually resided up-country or in the city of Charleston. Rice planters relied more on black drivers to supervise slave labor. They also used the task system whereby slaves had specific duties to perform each day and worked at their own pace. Tobacco planters employed the gang system with slaves tending the crop in groups under constant supervision. Unlike tobacco growers, rice planters did not raise foodstuffs, as the marshy soil was not very suitable for food crops. Low country slaves were therefore allowed to keep their own garden plots and had greater discretion over both their time and diet. By 1708, Africans constituted a majority of the population in South Carolina and outnumbered whites two-to-one by the 1720s.[22]

Acculturation proceeded more slowly in the low country than in the Chesapeake. It occurred most rapidly in the northern colonies, which had greater dispersion of the slave population, smaller slave holdings, and slaves who more often worked side by side with whites. The acculturation process was not just a one-way street with Africans adopting European culture and values. It was more a process of transculturation, a two-way street, with Africans and Europeans influencing each other.[23] At different times and in different regions, slaves occupied various points along the axis from African to Afro-American. A sudden infusion of more Africans from the continent, for example, slowed and often even reversed the pace of acculturation.

By 1774, there were some 59,000 slaves in the colonies, a number that grew exponentially to about 298,000 forty years later and to approximately 700,000 by 1790 when Africans were about one of every five inhabitants of the United States.[24] The slave trade to the American colonies was primarily an eighteenth-century phenomenon and was minor in comparison with the forced migration of Africans to the Caribbean and Brazil. Philip Curtin has estimated the total volume of the slave trade to the New World at around 9.4 million, for a more than 300-year period.[25] British North America received less than 5 percent of slave imports to the New World. Historians have recently used a comparative approach to determine the relative harshness of slavery in North America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. They have concluded that material conditions (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, and health) were better for North American slaves. Moreover, the slave population in the United States expanded through natural increase rather than continuous importation as was the case in the Caribbean and Brazil. The ratio of male to female slaves was almost even in the United States, thereby providing the possibility for family life. Morbidity and mortality rates were lower in the United States. But manumission was more difficult in the United States, and social distinctions became more rigidly based on race than class both during and after slavery.[26]

Charleston, South Carolina was the major entrepôt for slaves to North America. In many respects, Sullivan's Island on the northeast edge of Charleston's harbor was the "Ellis Island" for African arrivals. They were often quarantined there for health examinations before entering the colonies. More than 40 percent of the slaves imported to North America from 1700 to 1775 came through South Carolina.[27]

Second only to South Carolina as a slave entrepôt was Virginia, the largest slaveholding colony. The volume of the slave trade to the American colonies shifted during the eighteenth century, with the low country receiving almost three-quarters of the total from 1768 to 1772. The British rather than the colonists financed this trade, as their ships carried about 90 percent of the slaves landed at Virginia between 1727 and 1769. Those ships carried about two hundred Africans per voyage. The peak month was July with few, if any, landings during the winter months.[28]

For Africans, the "middle passage," or involuntary journey across the Atlantic Ocean, was a horrifying experience. Olaudah Equiano and Abd Al-Rahman Ibrahima provided two eyewitness accounts from the Africans' vantage. Both reported the lack of fresh air as one of the most agonizing parts of the "middle passage." Slaves were packed tightly together in the holds of ships where they could not stand erect and barely had room to move. The air became heavy from the stench of human excrement. Many Africans sickened and died during the voyage. Added to their physical discomfort was mental anxiety about their fate. Given that they generally represented different language groups, they could not communicate with each other and share their fears. Equiano thought that he had fallen into a world of "bad spirits" and wondered where he was being taken by strange men with "horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair." He recalled that the women's shrieks and the groans of dying men made the scene one of endless terror.[29] For Ibrahima, one of the most unsettling parts of the journey came when the ship's mates brought the captives on deck and forced them to sing and dance for exercise. As a Moslem, such practices violated his religious beliefs, but the ship's mates held the power of the lash.[30]

Africans did not passively submit to the "middle passage," as they resisted every step of the way from initial capture, to the march to the coast of Africa, incarceration in barracoons or stockades, confinement in forts, and transport aboard ship. For example, a Rhode Island ship, *Little George*, left the Guinea Coast on June 1, 1730 with ninety-six Africans. On its sixth day at sea, the African men managed to break their chains and to seize the ship. They steered it back home. There was greater likelihood of successful rebellion on board ship while anchored on the African coast than at sea. Some Africans became so desperate that they hurled themselves overboard whenever they had a chance in a vain attempt to return home. This practice was apparently so common that sharks habitually followed slave ships in eager anticipation.[31] Jay Coughtry has

estimated that there were seventeen revolts on Rhode Island vessels over a seventy-five-year period for an average of about one rebellion every fifty-five voyages.[12]

Except for Rhode Island ships, the slave trade to the American colonies during the eighteenth century did not follow the traditional model of the triangular trade, i.e., from North America to Africa, the Caribbean, and back.[13] That model prevailed in large measure during the seventeenth century when slave traders transported Africans first to the Caribbean and then to North America. Most slave ships of the eighteenth century took their human cargo directly from Africa to the colonies. Rhode Island ships, the major American carriers, were an exception. Those vessels took Africans to the Caribbean, exchanged them for molasses, and returned to Rhode Island with the syrup and any leftover slaves. Rhode Island distilleries changed the molasses to rum which its ships carried to West Africa in exchange for slaves, to begin the operation anew.[14]

Although slavery existed in Africa, it differed dramatically from the system of chattel slavery that developed in North America. Servitude in Africa was one of many forms of dependency. It was primarily a means to control people without kinship ties to a specific ethnic group. And it functioned more as a social than an economic system.[15] A person could become enslaved in many ways, such as being kidnapped, captured in war, sold for debt, offered as compensation for a crime, bartered for food during famine, or alienated from one's kinship group because of quarrels or antisocial behavior. The system of servitude was more fluid than rigid, and slave status depended on the manner in which the slave entered a particular society. The general rule was acquisition and incorporation; slave status was not permanent for generations, as African slaves retained their rights as persons.[16]

The slave trade could not have functioned on such a huge scale without African cooperation. Servitude or slavery had existed in Africa for some time, and it was not uncommon for Africans to trade slaves to Arab merchants. The initial entry of Europeans into the market merely redirected the flow of slaves. With the demand for labor in the New World, this traditional system changed significantly. It was no longer a matter of exchanging surplus slaves for merchandise but an enterprise of creating more captives to satisfy the market. Most Africans shipped to the New World probably never had experienced slavery in Africa. For that reason, they should more appropriately be called captives rather than slaves because their actual enslavement took place in the New World. African rulers to maintain themselves in power sought to meet European demands for captives.[17] Although they sold fellow Africans, there was no consciousness of being African at the time. The idea of African consciousness is a fairly modern development. African rulers sold their enemies and potential adversaries. Members of one ethnic group traded other ethnic groups. It was in North America more so than elsewhere in the

New World that the disparate African groups melded into a single people, the Afro-American. Identifiable African ethnic clusters persisted much longer in the Caribbean and Brazil.

The largest source of Africans transported to the New World were captives of war (about 34 percent), followed by kidnap victims (approximately 30 percent), wards of the judicial process (11 percent), compensation for debt (7 percent), persons sold by relatives or superiors (7 percent), and unknown (11 percent).[38] Most Africans in Virginia came from Guinea, next the Niger Delta, and then Angola. In South Carolina, about one-third of the Africans were from Angola, followed by Guinea, and the Niger Delta. Those three regions of Africa were the major areas for trade in captives to North America, i.e., the Guinea coast (from the Senegal River to the Volta River), the Niger River Delta, and Angola (the west coast of Africa south of the equator).[39]

The acculturation process for Africans in the American colonies advanced and receded with the tides of the slave trade. Before 1690, the black population was beginning to adapt to its new environment when there was a major infusion of Africans into the colonies. Between 1740 and 1790, as slave importation declined, there was an opportunity for creoles (blacks born in the colonies) and Africans to become accustomed to each other and to the broader society. Tensions often existed between creoles and Africans, especially over the choice of spouses. Africans considered creole slaves alien, particularly those who had adopted Christianity.[40] The most massive infusion of Africans came in the two decades between ratification of the American Constitution and legal termination of the slave trade in 1808. More than one hundred thousand Africans entered the United States in that period.[41]

The Great Awakening during the 1740s helped speed the acculturation process. Prior to that era, white ministers devoted little energy to converting Africans. What attention they did give was to creole slaves, as they considered changing the religious beliefs of African-born slaves almost impossible. With the decline in slave imports during the 1740s, proselytism among the slaves was probably easier. Moreover, the Methodists and Baptists, who converted slaves in unprecedented numbers, did not require literacy as a qualification for church membership. The Great Awakening not only accelerated acculturation but provided a vehicle through which the slaves could forge their own identity and develop some psychological autonomy. A church experience of their own, however formal or informal, helped slaves provide for leadership and create group solidarity and a means to cope with bondage. Christianity shaped their world view on slavery, their role in it, and their future. It encouraged survival and gave them a spiritual and psychological weapon against oppression. As Christians, slaves possessed the power to forgive their masters for transgressions against them, a potent force for an oppressed people.[42]

Anxiety and adjustment marked the lives of Africans in the American colonies before the revolutionary war. W. E. B. Du Bois suggested that they thought primarily of revolt and return to Africa.[43] The two major slave rebellions during the eighteenth century involved African-born slaves. In New York City in 1712, some twenty-five to thirty slaves, male and female, armed with clubs, knives, and a few guns, set fire to a building and waited in ambush for white colonists to approach it. As the whites rushed to extinguish the blaze, the slaves attacked, killing about nine men and wounding six others. Twenty-one slaves were later executed as a result of this uprising.[44] In South Carolina, about twenty slaves, mostly Angolans, assembled on Sunday, September 9, 1739, at the Stono River some twenty miles from Charleston. Under the leadership of a slave named Jemmy, they raided a store, secured small arms and ammunition, and marched south killing whites and burning their homes. Their numbers swelled to more than sixty as other slaves joined them. Late that afternoon, white colonists attacked the rebel band as it headed south, probably for sanctuary in St. Augustine, Florida. The colonists routed them, although it took a week for the militia to catch the largest remnant. Some twenty-five whites and fifty Africans lost their lives in this uprising.[45]

There were fewer slave revolts in North America than in the Caribbean or Brazil. Eugene Genovese has isolated several conditions that affected the probability of slave rebellion, such as: planter absenteeism, cultural distance between masters and slaves, economic depression, famine, plantation size (especially those with more than one hundred slaves), internal discord within the ruling class, a larger percentage of blacks than whites, a preponderance of African-born over creole slaves, the emergence of an autonomous black leadership class, and favorable geography that allowed slaves to form colonies and withstand attacks by slaveholders.[46] These circumstances existed less frequently in North America, especially after the eighteenth century, as the colonists united to form a strong central government, terminated the slave trade, and held all black people subordinate, whether slave or free.

Although slaves did run away and establish settlements or maroons outside plantations, such incidents were rare and short-lived in North America. Herbert Aptheker has estimated that there were only some fifty maroons in North America over nearly a two-hundred-year period.[47] The terrain, climate, demographics, and general white support for slavery made it difficult to sustain maroons. In the Caribbean and Brazil, with tropical climates and thick foliage, there was greater access to food and shelter. Moreover, North American planters usually resided on their plantations, white settlers knew the less mountainous terrain fairly well, and non-slaveholding colonists cooperated in containing slave rebellion. The colonies also had a higher proportion of creole slaves who were less

likely to flee and set up maroons. The largest and longest lasting maroon was in Florida before it became part of American territory and where the Seminole Indians sheltered fugitive slaves.[48]

As they became more acculturated, slaves resisted bondage in ways subtler than open revolt. Other forms of resistance included arson, poison, theft, breaking tools, abusing farm animals, slowing the work pace, and sometimes self-mutilation. Slave women as cooks were more likely to poison slaveholders, sometimes suddenly but often gradually. They also burned property alone or in concert with male slaves. In 1681, a female slave in Massachusetts was burned at the stake for attempting with two male companions to burn down their master's home. One of the female slaves' most effective weapons was the use of contraceptives and abortives to deny slaveowners profitable offspring and to control their own bodies. Running away was the dominant form of resistance, but its practice depended in large measure on the degree of acculturation. Slaves recently from Africa tended to escape in groups, while those slaves with skills and who spoke English well generally ran away alone. The former usually fled to the countryside, while the latter escaped to cities where they attempted to pass themselves off as freemen. From an analysis of sixty-five organized conspiracies and revolts, Marion Kilson found that flight from bondage predominated after 1830.[49]

The American Revolution provided a large measure of hope for slaves and even flamed growing sentiment for the abolition of slavery in the northern states. The American struggle for independence, however, posed a major contradiction for the new country's future. Many Africans took the "rights of man" rhetoric more seriously than the patriots themselves. But Africans were torn between the opposing forces, with only one firm commitment: to secure their own freedom. It was during the Revolutionary War era, however, that Americans moved toward a coherent racist ideology. As the patriots defined their own freedom, they excluded Africans from membership in the new nation. Similar to the development of slavery, racist ideology evolved over a number of years. What earlier had been ethnocentrism in subordinating Africans as a different class of people became racism in dominating them as an inherently inferior race. Africans, whether slave or free, became an out-group in a white man's country.[50]

Crispus Attucks, who joined the fray that ended in the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, and who lost his own life in the process, could not have foreseen the outcome of the American Revolution in its broadest dimensions, nor could those Africans who participated in the opening battles of the war at Lexington and Concord and at Bunker Hill. Phillis Wheatley, the African-born poet, praised George Washington in verse as a "... great chief, with virtue on thy side...." The first black person and only

the second woman to publish a book of poetry in America, she was probably the first author to use the term "Columbia" in reference to the new nation.[51] Some five thousand Africans fought with the patriots against the British. Initially, the Continental army barred their enlistment, but George Washington permitted those Africans who had taken part in the early battles to remain as soldiers. The British sought to use slaves in defense against the colonists. Lord Dunmore, Virginia Governor, issued a proclamation in November 1775, granting freedom to slaves reaching his lines. Many slaves took advantage of this offer as well as the confusion of war to gain their own freedom. By 1777, the Americans had great difficulty filling their enlistment quotas. The colonists, many of whom devoted more attention to their businesses and crops than to battle, did not rush to support the American cause. In desperation, Americans opened the military to Africans, with New England and the middle colonies enrolling both free Africans and slaves. In the southern colonies, only Maryland enlisted slaves. Virginia enrolled those slaves promised freedom by their owners for participating in the war. The Carolinas and Georgia refused to enlist any Africans, slave or free.[52]

Thousands of Africans acquired their freedom after the revolutionary war as each northern state took steps by 1804 to abolish slavery.[53] Even the Chesapeake states, where the war had disrupted their economies and where some sentiment existed against slavery, manumitted slaves in large numbers. The first federal census enumerated some 59,557 free Africans, with 27,034 in the North and 32,523 in the South. There were approximately 700,000 slaves in the United States at the time. From 1790 to 1830, the free African population more than quintupled to 319,599 (138,098 in the North and 181,501 in the South). By 1830, four states (Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania) contained more than half the free African population.[54]

The free African population became more concentrated in urban areas, while the slave population became more dispersed after the war. Almost half a million slaves were taken from the Chesapeake as part of the internal slave trade to new territories in the South and Southwest. Most of them ended up in Mississippi, Alabama, and areas west of the Mississippi River, with a smaller portion landing in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia. Africans from the Chesapeake, many of whom were creoles or their descendants, encountered the large infusion of African-born slaves, some one hundred thousand imported by 1808, when the United States ended participation in the foreign slave trade. The process of acculturation would therefore continue for at least another generation in these new regions.[55]

Numerous changes in African life took place during the Revolutionary era. Before the war, black men were given African, classical, biblical, and comical names, such as Cuff, Caesar, Solomon, and Neptune. Many of them did not have surnames. With freedom in the North, Africans adopted new names. Some selected surnames that reflected the spirit of the age and

called themselves Beman, Free, Freeman, Liberty, and Newman. Others chose English surnames or those suggesting skills like Carpenter, Cooper, or Mason. Few kept the surnames of their former owners. Within a generation after the war, classical forenames had all but disappeared, biblical forenames increased, and African forenames became less common. Northern Africans also formed their own households. Before the war and emancipation, they lived in the households of slave owners. As they clustered in urban areas, they secured employment, found spouses, began families, and started their own organizations.[56]

Newport, Rhode Island Africans established the first known black organization, the African Union Society, November 10, 1780. It is significant that practically all the early organizations designated themselves African. Moreover, Newport, the major northern slave port, probably had a larger African-born population than any other northern city. In 1787, the African Union Society corresponded with Boston Africans about emigrating to Africa. This was one of the earliest instances of formal contact between cities by Africans and reflected an emerging community of interest. Two years later, the organization contacted Philadelphia's Free African Society on the same subject. The Philadelphia group, formed in 1787, rejected the proposal for cooperation in returning to Africa. Although the two organizations differed on this matter, they maintained contact with each other.[57]

These groups, which functioned as mutual aid and benevolent societies, soon became the most prevalent form of organization for free Africans, especially in the North. They represented an amalgam of African influences and the American environment. They offered some stability for their members in a hostile society by providing a cushion against misfortune with sickness and disability benefits, burial insurance, and apprenticeships. They encouraged the education of black youth by starting and supporting schools. In the South, where the activities of free Africans were more closely proscribed, these organizations placed greater emphasis on proper burial. Mutual aid and benevolent societies in the North often spawned independent black churches. In Philadelphia, where Richard Allen started the Free African Society, he and several of its members founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church six months later, when they encountered difficulty worshipping at the white St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. Boston's African Society, established in 1796, helped initiate the first black church there in 1805. Newport's African Union Society evolved into the Union Congregational Church by 1823. Africans from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey gathered in 1816 to establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church as an independent denomination and one of the first national black organizations.[58]

Free Africans were ambivalent about their destiny in the United States after the American Revolution. Although the American Constitution contained no specific reference to race, there were implicit distinctions in Articles I and IV that differentiated "free persons" from "other persons," referred to importation of "such persons," and declared that "no person" held to service in one state could be discharged from that obligation by escaping to another state. The terms "slave" and "slavery" did not appear in the Constitution. Because both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution could be interpreted broadly, they became banners under which black people and their allies argued for the abolition of slavery and for racial equality.

The early practices of the new government, however, did not accord with its broadly defined principles. Black men could not carry the United States mail or be naturalized citizens. And democratic benefits for the common man during the Jacksonian era coincided with greater restrictions on the lives of Africans, slave and free.[59] In New England, Africans formed almost parallel governments with the tradition of "Negro Election Day." From the mid-eighteenth century to the 1830s, Africans in many New England towns annually elected "kings" and "governors" with a range of festivities including parades, games, dinners, and dances. In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, they selected a "king" (who acted as a judge), a "sheriff," and a "deputy." These officials functioned as a governing body for the black community. They tried cases for minor infractions and punished those found guilty. There were similar practices in Newport, Rhode Island and in Hartford, Connecticut. This activity could not have existed without white approval, but it filled several needs. For whites, it helped to preserve order and stability, and it gave Africans some control over their daily lives. Moreover, it helped Africans retain some elements of their past in song, dance, language, folklore, and values. The tradition of electing "kings" and "governors" corresponded to the installation of rulers in Africa. Some of the "governors" whose identities were recorded had African names—Cuff, Quash, Quosh, and Juba.[60]

Given the persistence of African culture, it should not be surprising that some of the earliest efforts to return to Africa originated in New England. Paul Cuffe, born near New Bedford, Massachusetts, tried to assist Africans in emigrating from the United States. A wealthy black ship captain and trader, he visited Sierra Leone in 1811 and held discussions with the African Institution in London about settling Africans from America in Sierra Leone. The African Institution administered the British colony in West Africa that was established in 1786 for those Africans who evacuated with the British after the American Revolution and who had become impoverished in Nova Scotia and in England. Cuffe returned to Sierra Leone in 1815 with thirty-eight emigrants. He had hoped to establish communication and commerce between the United States and West Africa. There was much enthusiasm among Africans in the United

States for Cuffe's venture. He reported in 1816: "I have had so many applications, that I believe I might have had the greater part to have carried out of Boston and the vicinity."[61]

The American Colonization Society (ACS), given the success of Cuffe's voyage and his report of broad support for emigration, assumed that free Africans were anxious to leave the United States. White philanthropists, who formed the ACS in December 1816, were moved by a range of motives from assisting slaveholders in manumitting their slaves, to helping free Africans establish themselves in their own country, to ridding the United States of all free Africans as a means of making slavery more secure. A month after its organization, some three thousand free Africans met at Philadelphia's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to denounce the ACS.[62] The ACS, with settlement of Liberia in 1821, provoked a discussion among free Africans that accelerated the ideological transition from Africans to Afro-Americans. The ACS held that Africans would never achieve equality in America and would be better served by emigrating to Africa where they could enjoy their full potential. Many free Africans recoiled from the idea that they had no choice but to leave the United States. They refused to abandon the land nurtured by their unrequited toil and where hundreds of thousands of Africans remained enslaved.[63]

This ideological transformation was fairly complete by the 1830s and the convening of the first black convention in Philadelphia, September 1830. The Cincinnati Riot in 1829 prompted this first national meeting to discuss the plight of Africans in America. In late August 1829, several hundred whites invaded Cincinnati's black community. As a result of the violent attack, almost half the city's black population fled to Canada for safety.[64] The Cincinnati pogrom might have influenced David Walker to publish his passionate "Appeal . . . to the Coloured Citizens of the World." Walker, a Boston clothes merchant, in no uncertain terms exhorted Africans to act as men, unite, and fight for their rights with violence if necessary. He condemned the ACS as one of the causes of their degradation in America, along with slavery, Christianity (as preached by slaveholders), and ignorance. Walker called foremost for Africans to seize their own destiny and to concern themselves with the plight of Africans throughout the world. Robert Alexander Young sketched a similar theme but with fainter strokes in his "Ethiopian Manifesto," which appeared shortly before Walker's "Appeal."[65]

The Cincinnati Riot, Walker's "Appeal," and the first black national convention mark a major watershed in Afro-American history. The demarcation is accented by Nat Turner's 1831 revolt and the rise of militant abolitionism. By this juncture, Africans had become Afro-Americans, culturally and ideologically. They identified themselves less frequently as Africans than as Colored Americans, Afric-Americans, Anglo-Africans, and Afro-Americans.[66] Moreover, the first black national convention

resolved that their destiny was in the United States. Richard Allen, President of the "American Society of Free Persons of Colour . . ." that grew out of the convention, declared that Afro-Americans had been born in the United States, had enriched it, and had become Americans by habit, manner, and custom.[67]

The publication of William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* in 1831 and organization of the American Antislavery Society in 1833, sharpened the divisions between North and South. Although there had been some weakening of support for slavery especially in the Chesapeake, the rise of militant abolitionism hardened southern defense of slavery. The South now justified slavery more as a "positive good" than as a "necessary evil," its earlier defense. The latter identified slavery as an expedient that was important for the region's economic development, while the former defined slavery as the natural condition of Afro-Americans. Ethnocentrism now gave way completely to racism.[68]

Nat Turner's revolt, the bloodiest slave rebellion in the United States, exacerbated the repression of Afro-Americans, slave and free, in the South. On August 21, 1831, Turner and five other slaves started from his master's plantation murdering whites along the way and recruiting slaves. Their objective was Jerusalem, the county seat for Southampton County, Virginia, where they planned to secure a large store of arms and ammunition. Turner's band wreaked havoc for some forty hours during which about fifty-seven whites were killed. Local authorities, joined by state militia and federal troops, assailed the slave rebels, now grown to almost eighty in number, before they reached Jerusalem. Turner escaped during the battle, but was caught two months later, tried, and executed. More than one hundred slaves were killed in the course of the insurrection and its aftermath.[69] The South strengthened its slave codes and increased restrictions on free Afro-Americans. By the mid-1830s, most southern states required slaveholders to secure judicial or legislative permission to manumit slaves and demanded that newly freed slaves leave their borders immediately. It uniformly became a crime to teach Afro-Americans, slave or free, to read and write. The growth of the free black population slowed in the South and in the nation as a whole after 1830. The only southern states that allowed free Afro-Americans to vote, Tennessee and North Carolina, disfranchised them in 1834 and 1835 respectively. Similar developments occurred in the North where by the 1830s practically every state racially segregated school children by law or custom. Afro-Americans could vote on the same basis as whites in only four states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. They confronted segregation on public conveyances and in theatres, housing, and employment throughout the North. Alexis de Tocqueville observed on his 1831 tour of the United States that the races were separated in practically every area of life.[70]

By the 1830s, most slaves were engaged in the cultivation of cotton and a

plantation routine that characterized slavery until its abolition in 1865. Willie Lee Rose has noted that slavery became a domestic institution after 1830, as planters treated their slaves more benignly but brooked no opposition. Planters acted as paternalistic father figures in the operation of plantations and in relation to their slaves. But they regarded slaves now more as dependent children than as a different class of workers.[71]

The 1830s therefore represent the first major watershed in Afro-American history. By this time, Africans had become Afro-Americans culturally and ideologically. Moreover, the forces set in motion by enslavement and intensified by the American Revolution relegated Afro-Americans to a subordinate position in American society. The stage for the next transition from slavery to freedom was firmly in place by the 1830s with the entrenchment of slavery and the eruption of racism.

SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

The transition from slavery to freedom for some four million Afro-Americans represented a process of change similar to the initial transition from Africa to America. Their transformation from chattel slaves into agricultural workers marks the second major watershed in Afro-American history. As the revolutionary war was a turning point for Africans in America that set into motion a train of events that dramatically altered their lives and status, so too the Civil War set off a series of forces whose direction did not become clear until the late nineteenth century. That sequel is better understood by examination of the dynamics of change from the 1830s to the 1890s.

Paternalism had come to characterize the institution of slavery by the 1830s. It grew out of a need to justify exploitation and to discipline slave labor. With the abolition of the foreign slave trade for Americans in 1808, slaveholders focused more attention on reproducing their existing labor force. They insisted on mutual obligations, duties, and responsibilities.[1] But such a relationship engendered in the eyes of slave masters in particular, and whites in general, the image of slaves as "Samboes," childlike, docile, lazy, and dependent.[2] Whites expected and demanded deference from Afro-Americans, slave and free. To retain their integrity, self-worth, and personal identity, Afro-Americans assumed a mask. The poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar captured this deception beautifully in his poem "We Wear the Mask":

> We wear the mask that grins and lies,
> It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
> This debt we pay to human guile;
> With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
> And mouth with myriad subtleties.[3]

Slaves recognized the need to play a variety of roles for their survival. But survival was not their all-consuming activity, as John W. Blassingame argues. Slaves knew that their labor, and therefore their lives, were of intrinsic value.[4] Moreover, they drew sustenance from the deep reservoir of Afro-American culture. At the center of that culture was the family, religion, music, and folklore. Afro-Americans fashioned a distinctive culture that helped them to affirm their humanity and to deflect the potentially debilitating effects of chattel slavery.

The kinship network symbolized the slaves' ability to preserve family identity. Choices in family life that they made after emancipation grew out of the norms and values that they had developed during slavery. Naming patterns, socialization practices, and preservation of kinship ties reveal the

slaves' effort to retain a sense of family. Slaves, rather than slaveholders, named their children. Daughters rarely carried their mothers' names, although sons regularly possessed their fathers' names. Herbert Gutman suggests that this practice might have been a way to preserve family ties, given that children followed the mother's legal status and that fathers were more likely to be separated from children than mothers. Moreover, slave children generally bore the names of blood relatives to reinforce kinship. That daughters did not normally have their mothers' names and that slaves observed a taboo against marrying first cousins demonstrates that they were not overly influenced by slaveholders who frequently married first cousins and habitually named daughters after their mothers.[5]

Kinship networks were extremely important to the slaves, especially since marriages, which they generally initiated, were often broken by sale and forced separation. Both actual and fictive kinship networks formed the social foundation of the slave community. Obligations within the slave community grew out of these kinship ties. The insistence that slave children address older slaves as aunts and uncles demonstrated respect for elders, while socializing children to the mores and values of the broader slave community.[6]

Slaves defined those norms and values through their religion, music, and folklore. They embraced Christianity but molded it to fit their own needs. They utterly rejected the idea that Christianity justified their status and condition.[7] It served as a unifying force that enabled them to perceive slavery critically, to project their own humanity, and to place moral limits on their submission to enslavement.[8] They had to hide their true religious beliefs from whites and often held their own religious services in the woods to avoid detection. For secrecy, they turned an iron pot or kettle upside down in the belief that it would catch the sound and send it deep into the earth. Their services emphasized a better future that gave them hope for the present. They vented their frustration and took solace in anticipation of divine deliverance. That faith, however, was not totally passive, as slaves used their religious convictions to rebel in the more overt manner of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, or Nat Turner as well as in more covert ways.[9]

Afro-American music, especially the spirituals, expressed the slaves' world view. The most persistent image in their songs, according to Lawrence Levine, was the idea of Afro-Americans as a chosen people. And the frequent references in the spirituals were to Old Testament figures who were delivered in this world such as Jonah, rescued from the belly of a whale, or Joshua, fighting the battle of Jericho with the walls tumbling down. The spirituals, coupled with the call and response style of religious worship, perpetuated a sense of community by placing the individual in constant communion with the group. The spirituals infused slaves with a sense of worth, change, and ultimate justice, reflecting more confidence than despair.[10]

In secular song, slaves eased their burden in the field by timing their tedious and repetitive tasks to their own music. They also subtly commented on their condition through song. Much slave music was ironic, such as the song Frederick Douglass recalled hearing:

> We raise de wheat, Dey gib us de corn;
> We bake the bread, Dey gib us de crust;
> We sif de meal, Dey gib us the huss;
> We peel the meat, Dey gib us the skin;
> And dat's de way Dey take us in

Douglass also related that the spiritual "O Canaan, sweet Canaan, I am bound for the land of Canaan" was interpreted by whites as referring to heaven, when actually the reference was to the North. Both spirituals and secular songs carried dual meanings.[11]

Afro-American folklore enabled slaves to release through fantasy and metaphor much pent-up tension, frustration, and anger. Moreover, folktales instilled techniques for survival. The importance of kinship ties and the responsibility of children to parents were transmitted through folklore. Trickster tales that featured the ultimate triumph of the weak over the strong were a prominent part of Afro-American consciousness. "Brer Rabbit" and "High John the Conqueror" stories demonstrated how a resourceful individual could outwit a strong and powerful adversary. Such tales helped slaves cope with daily life, fashion a world view, and reject stereotypical images.[12]

Slave religion, music, and folklore not only identified Afro-American culture but infused American culture, especially in the South. The spirituals, emotive participation in worship, and commingling of the sacred and the secular influenced religious practice. Instruments such as the banjo, musical bow, and numerous percussion instruments that Africans introduced to America became part of musical expression. The telling of folktales informed southern speech patterns, particularly the drawl, intonation of words, and elision of syllables. African terms such as tote, okay, okra, goober, yam, gumbo, hoodoo, mumbo-jumbo, juju, and banjo entered the southern vocabulary. African medical customs, crafts, architecture, cuisine, and dance made an imprint on southern and indeed American culture through Afro-Americans. Although many elements of Afro-American culture entered the dominant society, Afro-American culture in the main persisted as a distinctive expression in the separate environment of the slaves.[13]

While the slaves carved out their own place within the institution of slavery, free Afro-Americans especially in the North sought to abolish slavery. Through the black national convention movement of the 1830s and cooperation with white abolitionists, they tried initially to deflect arguments supporting slavery. Free black leaders suggested that through

moral reform, i.e., through education, temperance, and thrift, they would demonstrate to their detractors their worth as individuals.[14] They abandoned that tactic during the 1840s as they shifted, especially in state conventions, from individual assimilation to communal action.[15] They stressed the need to act for themselves and even advised violence if necessary for the slaves to gain their freedom. In 1843, at the Buffalo, New York black national convention, Henry Highland Garnet addressed the slaves directly with the injunction:

> Rather Die Freemen Than Live to be Slaves. Remember that you are Four Million.... Let Your Motto Be Resistance! Resistance! Resistance! No oppressed people ever secured their liberty without resistance.[16]

Although Garnet's address failed adoption as the sentiment of the convention by a single vote, it rekindled what Vincent Harding has called the "Great Tradition of Black Protest," which had its origin with David Walker's *Appeal.* Frederick Douglass opposed Garnet's speech as too radical, but four years later at the Troy, New York black national convention, he too stressed the need to "agitate" for the abolition of slavery and racial equality. Douglass advanced the "Great Tradition of Black Protest" with the first issue of his newspaper *The North Star* in which he editorialized that "every effort to injure or degrade" Afro-Americans and their cause would meet in *The North Star* "a constant, unswerving, and inflexible foe."[17]

Douglass's stand in 1847 helped to widen the growing breach between black and white abolitionists. White abolitionists' failure to fight vigorously for racial equality in the North disturbed black abolitionists. Moreover, white abolitionists were often patronizing, abstract, and too single-minded in using one strategy or another to end slavery.[18] By the late 1840s, black abolitionists, with few exceptions, had taken a more militant stance against slavery. They were leading supporters of the Underground Railroad that assisted as many as one hundred thousand fugitive slaves. They also founded vigilance committees and joined sympathetic whites to prevent escaped slaves from being recaptured, especially after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, which required police authorities to cooperate with slave catchers in returning runaway slaves under penalty of fine and imprisonment.[19]

Harriet Tubman, the most noted conductor on the Underground Railroad, actually traveled into the South to rescue slaves. Born a slave in 1821, she escaped twenty-eight years later. Over the next decade, she made some nineteen forays into the South, liberated several hundred slaves, and never lost a "passenger." She sang "I'm bound for the promised land" when approaching plantations as a signal for the slaves to meet her. There were rewards as high as $40,000 for "Moses," who many slaveholders thought was a man. In 1860, Tubman roused Afro-Americans in Troy, New York to rescue a fugitive slave named Nalle. They seized him as he was led from the

courthouse after his arrest and secreted him to safety.[20] Tubman was one of the few black leaders to assist John Brown in securing recruits for his raid on Harpers Ferry. That raid frightened the South as much as or perhaps more than Nat Turner's rebellion because a white abolitionist decided to attack slavery with arms.[21]

Although some free Afro-Americans worked to weaken the edifice of slavery in the United States, others contended especially by the 1850s that only the "reflex influence" of a strong black nation would end slavery and secure racial equality. The 1850s was a bleak decade for Afro-Americans with passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which opened the possibility of expanding slavery into the Northwest with the doctrine of "popular sovereignty," and the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision in which Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney declared that Afro-Americans "had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect...."[22] Under such worsening conditions, there was growing support for emigration, especially to Africa. Moreover, the black national conventions of the 1850s moved more toward a Black Nationalist position. The 1853 Rochester meeting was the best organized and most well attended of the conventions. It resolved to form a national council to advance Afro-American interests and created four committees on business, a manual labor school, publications, and a protective union.[23] While the Rochester Convention sought control over important areas of Afro-American life in America, other meetings looked abroad.

The 1854 National Emigration Convention in Cleveland, Ohio and subsequent meetings considered areas outside the United States as the best route for self-determination. Black Nationalism flourished during the late 1850s as Afro-Americans sought to control their own destiny. Martin R. Delany, the foremost Black Nationalist theorist of the era, advised that "a new country, and new beginning, is the only true rational, politic remedy for our disadvantageous position...." He held that Afro-Americans constituted a "nation within a nation" with a distinctive culture that they should preserve. He believed that the race would yet instruct the world in morals, religion, and civil government. While Delany's approach to emigration was more political, Henry Highland Garnet's was more religious in seeking to establish a "grand centre of Negro nationality" in Africa. Garnet organized the African Civilization Society in 1858 to spread the gospel in Africa, civilize the continent, end the slave trade, cultivate cotton to undercut American production and thereby end slavery as it became unprofitable, and uproot prejudice against black people throughout the world.[24]

Although there was some controversy over destination, by the eve of the Civil War, most prominent free black leaders supported emigration. Even

Douglass, one of the strongest opponents of emigration, questioned the future of Afro-Americans in the United States. He counseled selective emigration to Haiti for those black people with slim chances for improvement in the United States. Douglass made arrangements to visit Haiti himself to determine prospects for self-elevation there. He prepared to leave with a group of emigrants at the end of April 1861, but the Civil War interrupted his plans. Along with many Afro-Americans, slave and free, Douglass became convinced that the Civil War would fundamentally improve their status.[25]

The Civil War and emancipation triggered a turning point for Afro-Americans similar to that triggered by the revolutionary war. Northern free Afro-Americans recognized the potential for the war to destroy slavery. They quickly formed militia companies and offered their services to the Union army, only to be rejected. Even in the South, free Afro-Americans volunteered to defend their local areas in the hope that the South would reward their loyalty with better conditions.[26] On plantations, slaves responded to the outbreak of war with some ambivalence, although most sensed that the conflict might mean freedom. Booker T. Washington, a child at the time, later wrote that the slaves kept themselves well informed about the progress of the war via the "grapevine telegraph." He also noted that most verses of slave songs referred to freedom but that the songs took on new meaning. He explained: "Now they gradually threw off the mask; and were not afraid to let it be known that the 'freedom' in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world."[27]

Slaves did not rise up in bloody revolt during the Civil War, because the South was an armed camp. Moreover, southern whites watched slaves more closely than ever for fear of insurrection. But for slaves, the day of reckoning was near. They bided their time until there was a chance to escape to Union lines in what W. E. B. Du Bois has called the "general strike" that deprived the South of much needed labor to support its war effort. As the war progressed, only old men, women, and children were left on most plantations.[28]

The North made it clear at the outset through President Abraham Lincoln and Congress that the war was being fought to maintain the Constitution and to preserve the Union. At first, Congress instructed military commanders to return fugitive slaves to their owners. Later, it passed several acts that confiscated slave property of owners who permitted their use for military purposes, prohibited military officers from assisting in capturing fugitive slaves, and finally declared free those slaves of owners in rebellion against the Union. Congress enacted this last measure, the Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, nearly three months before Lincoln issued his Preliminary Proclamation. Lincoln wanted to keep the border states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri) in the Union

and to encourage manumission through compensation and colonization. In issuing his Preliminary Proclamation in late September 1862, he stated: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. . . . What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union."[29]

When the Confederacy refused to end its rebellion on January 1, 1863, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation became effective, although it applied only to those states in rebellion against the Union and to those areas not under control of Union forces.[30] Few slaves, therefore, became free as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln's order, however, did provide for the enlistment of black troops, a measure that Congress had approved six months earlier. Some 210,000 black men fought in the Union army and navy during the Civil War (180,000 in the army and 30,000 in the navy). They comprised about one in eight of the soldiers and one in four of the sailors. Almost one of every five black males over the age of fifteen served in the Union military.[31]

Their participation in the war was one of the most important elements in the transition from slavery to freedom. The sight of armed and uniformed black men as part of a victorious army had a tremendous effect on both blacks and whites in the South.[32] The Confederacy did not initially recognize black men as soldiers and often killed rather than capture them. At Fort Pillow, Tennessee in 1862, Confederate troops under the command of General Nathan B. Forrest slaughtered most of the black men stationed there rather than let them surrender. Forrest later became the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan after its organization in 1866 at Pulaski, Tennessee.[33] The record of black soldiers, the manner in which they conducted themselves, and the way in which they acquitted themselves in battle made emancipation and citizenship more conceivable to the nation as a whole. In taking the message of freedom to enslaved Afro-Americans throughout the South, black soldiers informed the freedmen about their rights. Military experience reinforced in the minds of black men the idea of racial equality. But they had to fight on two fronts during the war, to save the Union and to be paid equally. Black troops received less military pay than white soldiers, a difference of six dollars a month. Many black soldiers went for more than a year without compensation rather than accept discriminatory wages. Congress in June 1864, after much protest by black troops, passed legislation to equalize military pay. Black soldiers, many of whom acquired new skills, knowledge, and broader horizons in the military, became important leaders afterwards, organizing schools, churches, and fraternal groups.[34]

The tens of thousands of slaves who flocked behind Union lines as federal troops marched South were among the first to begin detaching themselves from the web of interrelationships spun during bondage. Before the Confiscation Act of July 1862, they were contraband of war that the federal government used to build fortifications, drain ditches, forage

for food, tend animals, and cultivate cotton to replace disrupted supplies. After the Emancipation Proclamation, the military supervised their labor and activity. The Union army initiated practices that became federal policy after the war. For example, the military insisted that the freedmen sign labor contracts, usually for a year, to work on plantations under conditions that unfortunately were similar to slavery. The freedmen, although technically free, were continually restricted as the social control and economic organization of the peculiar institution persisted.[35]

On March 3, 1865, Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau) in the War Department. The Freedmen's Bureau continued many of the practices started by the military during the war. Congress planned for the Freedmen's Bureau to last only one year after the end of the war. It was to control all policies relating to refugees and freedmen, supervise labor contracts, and administer abandoned lands in the South. The Freedmen's Bureau could rent up to forty acres of land to former slaves with the option to buy. Its major source of revenue came from the sale and rental of abandoned lands. The Freedmen's Bureau encouraged and even forced former slaves to remain on plantations by reducing rations and clothing, enforcing state vagrancy laws, and coercing freedmen into signing labor contracts. On the positive side, the Freedmen's Bureau helped find missing relatives, formalized marriages, fostered education, heard complaints, adjudicated legal cases, and later assisted freedmen in registering to vote.[36]

Most slaves gained freedom with ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 18, 1865, which abolished slavery or involuntary servitude except as punishment for crime. It was in their daily lives, however, that the freedmen defined their freedom. According to Leon Litwack, freedom in the most immediate and meaningful sense was the limitation placed on white behavior, that is, the freedmen could lead their lives without being forced to defer to whites.[37] One of their first acts, even during the war, was to educate themselves. In military camps, black soldiers eagerly sought literacy. Susie King Taylor, for example, washed clothes in any army camp during the day and taught black soldiers to read and write at night. She had been born a slave in 1848 but was educated by a free black woman in Savannah, Georgia who secretly conducted classes for black children.[38] Immediately after emancipation, the freedmen started schools or classes that they managed themselves by calling on one of their own, who had acquired some literacy during slavery, as a teacher until northern instructors or Freedmen's Bureau educators reached them. The freedmen generally assumed the lion's share of expenses for teachers in their schools.[39]

After establishing schools, the freedmen attempted to reconstitute families, record marriages, and resettle themselves away from the fields where they had labored as slaves. They adopted or revealed surnames for the first time. For most of them, freedom meant that they did not have to work in gangs reminiscent of bondage and that they could remove their wives and children from work in the fields. It meant that they could move old dwellings or build new cabins at some distance from the old slave quarters. Ultimately, freedom was the ability to bargain for their labor, to assume the formerly repressed roles of mother and father, and to demand respect for their new existence.[40]

One consequence of freedom was the assertion of authority by black men over black women. The role of black men as liberators especially in the army fostered sexual divisions similar to those in the dominant society. Black men more than black women experienced a dramatic change in status especially after they secured the right to vote. Black women were confined to the domestic realm of the home, while black men assumed leadership positions in politics, education, religion, and community organization. Unlike white women, black women did not long enjoy the "cult of domesticity," as they had to perform double duty in the home and in the field for their families to have even a chance for a decent living.[41]

Most southern states adopted Black Codes after the war that limited the freedmen's mobility. The main focus of the Black Codes was the control of labor.[42] They generally required written evidence of employment for the year and included vagrancy, apprenticeship, and anti-enticement clauses. Vagrancy laws provided for the arrest of any person without gainful employment. The apprenticeship laws required minor children whose parents could not adequately support them to work, often for former slave owners. And the anti-enticement laws prevented anyone from recruiting workers already under contract.[43]

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1866 nullified the Black Codes, their spirit prevailed throughout the South. The 1866 Civil Rights Act recognized Afro-Americans as citizens and affirmed equal protection under the law for all citizens. When Congress gained control of Reconstruction in 1867, there was a wave of legislation and constitutional amendments to secure equal protection under the law for the freedmen. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified July 28, 1868, prohibited states from making or enforcing laws that abridged or denied the rights of citizens of the United States. The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified March 30, 1870, declared that neither the United States nor any individual state could deny or abridge the rights of citizens to vote on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Congress in 1870-71 passed the Enforcement Acts to prevent the Ku Klux Klan and other secret terrorist organizations from infringing upon the rights of freedmen under provisions of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. Finally, in 1875 Congress passed a Civil Rights Act that guaranteed equal rights in public

accommodations and transportation and forbade excluding Afro-Americans from jury duty.[44]

The Reconstruction era (1867-77) was a period of fundamental change in the freedmen's lives. The two major changes occurred in politics and labor. Changes in politics, however, proved ephemeral once the Redeemers wrested control of southern governments from Republicans, often through fraud, intimidation, and violence. Reconstruction unleashed social class antagonisms among whites that pitted up-country yeomen against low country planters. Whites were more often divided on economic issues than they were united on the matter of race. Even among Afro-Americans there were differences between the freemen (free before the war) and the freedmen (free after the war). The former emphasized politics, education, and land, while the latter stressed land, education, and politics. Armstead Robinson has noted that social class tensions in black and white communities contributed to the failure of the Republican party in the South to hold political power and to make lasting changes in the lives of the freedmen.[45]

The freedmen desired land as a way to give economic substance to freedom. Several government actions such as the Confiscation Acts, General Sherman's Field Order #15, establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau, and the 1866 Southern Homestead Act generated the impression that the freedmen might receive forty acres and a mule. Less than 5 percent of the freedmen, however, acquired any land during the first years of freedom. The Republican party, Congress, and indeed the nation did not consider economic independence a requisite for freedom. Although Republicans controlled most southern states by June 1867, they focused on voting rights and not land.[46] The spirit of laissez-faire predominated throughout the country on the assumption that with equal protection under the law, Afro-Americans could compete on the same footing with all other citizens. The concept of "rugged individualism," that the freedmen could rise by dint of hard work, was dominant.[47]

If the freedmen could not acquire land, they would forge a new labor relationship. Southern landowners preferred arrangements similar to the old labor system of slavery, with freedmen working in large groups under close supervision. The freedmen, however, wanted greater control over their own labor. Sharecropping and tenant farming became a compromise between the freedmen's quest for autonomy and the planters' determination to exercise complete authority. Under the system of sharecropping, planters provided the land, tools, work animals, and seed in return for half the crop. Tenant farmers agreed to rent the land for one-quarter to one-third of the crop but provided their own equipment. In both cases, farmers needed credit to sustain their families until harvest. Merchants supplied provisions but insisted on a cotton crop as collateral because it was a cash crop, could be stored easily, and involved less risk than food crops. They charged interest rates as high as 60 percent, which made it difficult for farmers to clear a profit after expenses at the end of

each season and often left them in debt at the beginning of the next season.[48]

This new labor relationship fostered the transformation of Afro-Americans from chattel slaves into agricultural workers, with planters now in the role of employers and the freedmen their employees.[49] Outside the cotton belt, where more than half the black population lived by 1880, most freedmen did work for wages. Throughout the South, the legal system made it difficult for freedmen to progress economically. The law was a vehicle through which planters defined property rights and disciplined labor. The convict-lease system allowed planters, mine owners, and the timber industry to use prison labor in return for maintaining and guarding prisoners. Southern justice entrapped black men for petty offenses to supply tractable laborers. The crop-lien statutes resulted in peonage by confining farmers to the land until they had cleared debts. The enclosure of land made it most difficult for freedmen to own and graze livestock as some had done during slavery. New laws prohibited hunting and fishing on private property, a practice that had sustained many freedmen under bondage. Finally, legislatures shifted the burden of taxation from property to individuals, thereby forcing freedmen to work.[50]

The law also restricted the freedom of former slaves in Supreme Court decisions initially, and later in state disfranchisement and segregation statutes. Reconstruction was but a flicker in the previous 250-year history of black people in America. Du Bois observed: "The slave went free; stood for a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery." The Freedmen's Bureau, for example, had an effective life of an average of four years in the eleven former Confederate states. By 1869, its major work was in education and the collection of black veterans' claims. In the latter case, the bureau encouraged black soldiers to deposit their pay, bonuses, and pensions in the Freedmen's Savings Bank, which the former slaves assumed was a government agency where their money would be secure. The financial crisis of 1873 precipitated the bank's failure, and freedmen across the South lost more than $1 million when its doors closed in 1874.[51]

The freedmen's inability to enjoy true equality in the South prompted renewed interest in emigration. Some twenty-five thousand Afro-Americans migrated to Kansas in 1879 to secure a better living. As many as sixty thousand had settled there by 1881. Martin R. Delany helped organize the Liberian Exodus Joint Steamship Company in Charleston, South Carolina in 1877. More than thirty thousand black families sought to leave the state, but the movement floundered from financial problems. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church preached the virtues of emigration throughout the South during the late nineteenth century. Afro-Americans also established some twenty-five black towns in Oklahoma during the 1890s. According to August Meier

and Elliott Rudwick, "nationalist sentiment, although present throughout the black man's experience in America, tends to be most pronounced when the Negroes' status has declined, or when they have experienced intense disillusionment following a period of heightened but unfilled expectations."[52]

In a series of cases from 1876 to 1896, the Supreme Court confined to the states enforcement of civil rights and the right to vote. The court ruled that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, as well as the 1875 Civil Rights Act, restrained state rather than individual denial of civil and voting rights. Finally, in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) the Court upheld the doctrine of "separate but equal" whereby segregated transportation and accommodations could be provided for Afro-Americans as long as they were "equal" to facilities available to other citizens.[53]

The triumph of Jim Crow (racial segregation) in the aftermath of *Plessy v. Ferguson* resulted from numerous developments in the South after the Civil War. The lingering question for historians has been the extent to which segregation crystallized during the Reconstruction era or later.[54] It is generally agreed, though, that racial segregation and violence peaked during the 1890s. The issue of white control of Afro-Americans became more acute with the abolition of slavery. For a time, federal restraints curtailed the rise of de jure segregation, although de facto racial separation existed in most areas of southern life. Howard Rabinowitz has written that segregation replaced exclusion of Afro-Americans in education, welfare services, militia duty, and public accommodations. Because of their exclusion or restriction from adequate services, Afro-Americans had to provide for their own welfare. Eric Foner has noted that in the growth of black churches, colleges, and fraternal organizations, Reconstruction "...gave birth to the modern black community, whose roots lay deep in slavery, but whose structure reflected the consequences of emancipation."[55]

The 1890s were a decade of rapid social and economic change in the South with the unrest of yeoman farmers (both white and black) as expressed in the Populist movement, the rise of a new generation of Afro-Americans not born in slavery or wed to traditional behavior, and improvements in transportation with invention of the automobile and the Post Office's inauguration of rural free delivery in 1896 that shattered the isolation of the rural South. By 1900, about a quarter of southern black farmers owned their land. August Meier has concluded that "while the conception varied, it was widely held that a New Negro, self-respecting, educated, prosperous, race-proud, self-dependent, deserving and demanding full citizenship, was arising." Afro-Americans organized themselves in an unprecedented manner during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, in the National Baptist Convention (1895), with some three million members, and in black professional groups such as the National Medical Association (1895), National Negro Business League (1900), and the National Association of Colored Women (1896).[56]

The National Association of Colored Women was an important development because it was not a black men's auxiliary nor a minority faction within a white women's organization. It was an independent effort by black women to break the leadership monopoly of black men that emerged after the Civil War and to initiate their own agenda for elevating black women in particular and Afro-Americans in general. The National Association of Colored Women would also play a critical role in assisting the next major transition from countryside to city.[57]

The black population shifted after the Civil War to the Southwest. The movement was primarily from one rural area to another, as only 15 percent of southern Afro-Americans resided in cities by 1890. The black population became concentrated in southern counties that characterized the Black Belt region stretching from Maryland south through Georgia and west to Texas. Afro-Americans clustered together in the Black Belt both for community and protection.[58]

The growth of segregation was not sufficient to hold Afro-Americans in check. Some of the most brutal domestic violence ever to appear in the United States (with the exception of extermination of American Indians) took hold during the 1890s. Lynching (summary and illegal mob execution usually by hanging) threatened Afro-Americans more severely in counties where they constituted less than a quarter of the population. From 1889 to 1899, there was an average of 188 lynchings a year, which outnumbered legal executions in the country by two to one. According to Walter White of the NAACP, lynchings represented southern fear of black progress. The violence was often directed at the most successful Afro-Americans or those who refused to exhibit traditional behavior. Although southern apologists justified lynchings as necessary to protect the virtue of white women, fewer than one in five cases involved the charge of rape, and those accusations were often proved false. From 1889 to 1903, 1,578 black men and also women were lynched in the South in often sadistic rituals.[59]

Similar to the rise of racist doctrine to defend slavery were racist justifications for disfranchisement, segregation, and lynching. The ideology of white supremacy became ascendant during the late nineteenth century, especially in the doctrine of Social Darwinism, which suggested that through natural selection and survival of the fittest, the white race had risen to the highest stage of civilization and that the black race had remained in an arrested stage of development. The idea of the "white man's burden" to guide and protect inferior people of color influenced American domestic and foreign policy during the late nineteenth century.[60]

Although American society North and South still viewed Afro-Americans as racially inferior, by the 1890s, in Walter White's words, "Uncle Tom's sons and daughters were attaining manhood in more than the sense of years lived."[61] The "New Negro" had in large measure broken

the grip of paternalism and deferential behavior through a process that began with emancipation and culminated in the 1890s. With the transition from slavery to freedom, the former slaves transformed themselves from chattel slaves into agricultural workers with more control of their daily lives and labor. That transformation met stiff resistance in the South but it paved the way for the next transition from countryside to city.

COUNTRYSIDE TO CITY

The black population, predominantly southern and rural in 1890, became primarily urban by World War II. The transition from countryside to city began during the 1890s, reached massive proportions during World War I, and changed the character of the black population by the end of World War II. It stimulated the transformation of Afro-Americans from agricultural into industrial workers. Migration and urbanization presented new challenges for Afro-Americans. They had to adjust to the city, broaden their culture, and create new organizations to fight against racial discrimination and segregation.

The manner in which Afro-Americans would confront the challenges of the early twentieth century was a source of controversy, especially in the different strategies proposed by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. Washington rose to prominence as *the* black leader after his address before the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition on September 18, 1895. In his speech, Washington counseled Afro-Americans in the South to "cast down your bucket where you are." He told them that "in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."[1] He soon filled the vacuum left by Frederick Douglass's death, February 20, 1895. Washington's emergence as *the* black leader, however, was more his anointment by southern whites and wealthy northern philanthropists who desired a black spokesman to symbolize the end of Reconstruction and to represent moderate solutions to the race problem.[2]

Washington fit the bill almost perfectly. He believed that most Afro-Americans were better off in rural areas where they could make the forces of nature work for them in securing a material base for future progress. He reasoned that "all races that have reached success and have influenced the world for righteousness have laid their foundation at one stage of their career in the intelligent and successful cultivation of the soil. . . . Any people that begins on a natural foundation of this kind, rises slowly but naturally and gradually in the world." In the meantime, he did not favor agitation for civil or political rights, at least not in a manner that might generate racial tension and conflict.[3] At the opposite pole stood Du Bois, who maintained that "the Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men."[4] He held that the "Talented Tenth," the best of the race, should guide the masses through talent, character, and leadership. Moreover, Du Bois argued that no people gained their rights by voluntarily throwing them away. He urged Afro-Americans to ". . . insist

continually, in season and out of season, that voting is necessary to modern manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism. . . ."[5]

The major difference between Washington and Du Bois stemmed not so much from a preference for "industrial" or "liberal" education as from their analyses of Afro-Americans' condition. Washington placed great faith in the "agrarian ideal" and the idea of individual success.[6] Du Bois stressed the changing character of labor and the need for Afro-Americans to take their place in the new industrial order through group organization and achievement.[7] Although they remained at odds from 1903, when Du Bois openly criticized Washington in his book *Souls of Black Folk*, to Washington's death in 1915, there were forces at play that increasingly propelled Afro-Americans to the nation's cities.

The federal census of 1890 listed 80 percent of all Afro-Americans and 85 percent of those in the South (where 90 percent of them lived) as rural.[8] The migration of Afro-Americans from the rural South and settlement in the cities became significant during the 1890s. This was not, however, a movement directly from southern agricultural fields to northern industrial cities. The major shift in the black population to 1910 was from rural to urban South. It was from southern cities and towns that Afro-Americans trekked north in large numbers after 1910. From 1910 to 1920, more than half a million Afro-Americans left the South, with the largest numbers migrating in a three-year span, 1916-19, in what has been called the "Great Migration."[9] The floodgate of black migration opened by World War I did not close until the Depression era. Almost a million Afro-Americans quit the South during the 1920s.

The demand for labor in northern industry during the war as the number of European immigrants plummeted precipitated the "Great Migration." Northern labor agents with promises of high wages and good living conditions scoured the South for workers. Some of them even offered free transportation. Southern states became alarmed by the sudden and extensive loss of its black labor force. Some states tried to stem the tide with laws and local ordinances that required labor agents to pay exorbitant fees for licenses to recruit workers. They even attempted to block circulation of northern black newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender*, which extolled the virtues of the North while publicizing southern atrocities against Afro-Americans, especially brutal lynchings. But southern Afro-Americans continued to "vote with their feet."[10]

For historians and other scholars, a major question has been the extent to which the push of the South or the pull of the North sparked black migration. The 1890s depression, floods, and spread of boll weevil infestation from the cotton lands of the Southwest to the Southeast severely limited economic opportunity in the South. Disfranchisement, lynching, and the rise of Jim Crow curtailed civil rights there. Most

scholars seem to agree that the pull of the North was more important than the push of the South. The First World War in particular generated greater economic fortune for Afro-Americans in the industrial North. Allied with the potential for making a better living was the prospect of justice, fairness, political rights, and more educational opportunity for their children.[11]

The migration north soon flowed along fairly regular paths. Afro-Americans from the South Atlantic states (North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia) generally moved to New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; from Alabama to Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana; and from Mississippi and Louisiana to Illinois with some to Missouri.[12] Those paths almost paralleled rail lines, the dominant mode of transportation for black migrants. Although Afro-Americans moved from the South in large numbers, they still never completely severed ties with the South. There was much movement back and forth that preserved family bonds, as Allan Ballard, for example, has beautifully observed in the story of his family.[13]

Akron, Chicago, Detroit, Gary, New York, and Philadelphia experienced exponential increases in their black populations from 1910 to 1920.[14] Whereas Afro-Americans generally lived scattered throughout northern cities at the turn of the century, by the end of the war, they resided in well-defined areas that have become known as "ghettos." As Allan Spear has explained for Chicago, the "ghetto" resulted from both external and internal forces. Whites created the physical "ghetto" by confining Afro-Americans to specific neighborhoods. But Afro-Americans developed the institutional "ghetto" to meet their own needs.[15] The problem of an "enduring ghetto," the persistence of black urban slums with the pathologies of overcrowding, deterioration, crime, and poverty, perplexes many scholars. John W. Blassingame has suggested the concept of "enduring communities" in which Afro-Americans "had visions of the future which included self-determination, solving their own problems, educating their children and working and playing..." to describe many black neighborhoods.[16] The slum of the post-World War II era differed in many important respects from the "ghetto" of the early twentieth century. Black businesses, for example, in the form of insurance companies, banks, theatres, nightclubs, and taxicab, real estate, and cosmetic companies, as well as a host of other enterprises, flourished during the early twentieth century, with a clientele virtually ignored by white business. Madame C. J. Walker became perhaps the first black millionaire with her hair preparations and beauty culture schools.[17]

Although many Afro-Americans enjoyed a measure of success in the North, the bulk of them found employment only in unskilled, semi-skilled, and domestic positions. In 1920, from one-third to one-half of all black women held personal and domestic service jobs. Moreover, black women constituted a larger portion of the labor force than white women because black men in the main could not secure work in the primary and even secondary sectors of the labor market. Although they gained employment in the steel, meat-packing, and automobile industries, for example, their

jobs were primarily unskilled. Even those black men with skills found employment blocked by the nascent craft unions.[18]

The huge influx of Afro-Americans into northern cities sparked competition for jobs, housing, transportation, education, political power, and recreational facilities. That competition often erupted into racial hostility and conflict, the worst of which took place during World War I and immediately afterward. In east St. Louis, Illinois, nine whites and thirty-nine Afro-Americans lost their lives in a riot that began July 2, 1917.[19] There were also riots that year in Chester and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as well as Houston, Texas. In the summer of 1919, less than six months after the war, race riots broke out in some twenty-five cities and towns. Because so much blood flowed in America's cities, the period was called the Red Summer of 1919. Over two and a half million veterans returned to claim jobs left behind to fight the war. Moreover, the country suffered some of its most severe labor strife ever with hundreds of strikes and lockouts. Afro-Americans became convenient scapegoats, targets for whites anxious about their status in the postwar adjustment. The greatest loss of life came in Chicago, beginning July 27, with fifteen whites and twenty-three Afro-Americans killed during almost two weeks of violence.[20]

Although Afro-Americans were the objects of white frustration after the war, they were also determined to break the pattern of racial subordination that had caused many of them to flee the South. When America entered World War I in 1917, a few black leaders such as Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, editors of the *Messenger Magazine,* urged black men not to risk their lives for freedom abroad that was denied them at home. Du Bois in *Crisis* magazine, however, advised Afro-Americans "... while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and *close ranks* shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens. ..."[21] Most black men heeded Du Bois's advice, although they confronted racism and discrimination in the military as horrendous as in the most backward southern state. The army drafted black men at a rate higher than their percentage of the nation's population. Some 380,000 black men served in the army, but only a small fraction, about 42,000, saw combat duty. The Marine Corps refused black enlistees, while the navy used them only as messmen and servants. The typical black soldier worked in labor and stevedore battalions. The four regiments of the Ninety-third Division, one of two all-black divisions, fought as part of the French army. The 369th Regiment of the Ninety-third Division spent more time on the battle front than any other American soldiers. The U.S. military supplied the French with a memorandum, "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops," that warned against fraternizing with black soldiers. It instructed the French on American views about Afro-American inferiority and asked them explicitly to prevent any intimacy between black troops and white

women. Despite this propaganda, most black soldiers in France experienced an air of freedom previously unknown to them. Many of them returned to the United States resolved to gain their share of freedom and democracy at home.[22]

The struggle for racial equality had received a significant boost in 1909 when a group of white reformers joined with a few Afro-Americans to start the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This organization rekindled the abolitionist spirit of black and white cooperation against racial injustice. Afro-Americans had formed the National Afro-American League in 1890 to protest disfranchisement, lynching, the convict-lease system, inequitable funding for black schools, and segregation. The group reorganized, however, in 1898 as the National Afro-American Council under the influence of Booker T. Washington.[23] His check on open and vigorous protest led his opponents, most notably William Monroe Trotter and Du Bois, to establish the Niagara movement in 1905. Its Declaration of Principles, written largely by Du Bois and Trotter, called for constant protest to achieve Afro-American rights. The Niagara movement's most important accomplishments were in letting White America know that Black Americans would not remain silent or accommodate themselves to racial oppression and in laying a foundation for the emergence of the NAACP.[24]

The NAACP grew out of reaction to the Springfield, Illinois race riot on August 14, 1908 (the centennial year of Abraham Lincoln's birth). Angered that justice had not moved swiftly enough for two black men accused of rape, a mob invaded Springfield's black neighborhood, set fire to black homes and businesses, and lynched two black men, one an elderly barber and the other an eighty-four-year-old cobbler whose major offense was that he had been married to a white woman for more than thirty years. Thousands of Afro-Americans fled their homes as businesses fired them and grocers refused to sell them food. Hundreds left on foot for asylum in St. Louis and Chicago. Towns such as Jacksonville and Peoria, Illinois would not permit the exiles to enter their city limits. The thought of such malice in the city that housed the tomb of the "Great Emancipator" appalled many northern liberal whites.[25] They helped to organize the NAACP as a guardian of Afro-American rights that would let no injustice escape without protest. The NAACP sought to "fix beyond question the status of the American citizen of Negro descent."[26]

The National Urban League (NUL), the second oldest civil rights organization, appeared a year after the NAACP. It resulted from different concerns and with its own agenda. The NUL focused primarily on the urban plight of Afro-Americans and sought to ease social adjustment to life in the city. Through social work, it endeavored to solve the problems of black city dwellers in housing, employment, and general welfare. For its first thirty years, the Urban League, according to Nancy Weiss, tried to fit Afro-Americans into the American system, to realize the full fruits of American democracy.[27]

While the NAACP and the Urban League were interracial groups trying to incorporate Afro-Americans into the society, the Garvey movement appeared in 1917 and rapidly became the largest mass movement among Afro-Americans prior to the civil rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Marcus Garvey praised Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* as one of the most important books he had ever read. Washington's development of Tuskegee Institute, his program of industrial education, and his model of success significantly influenced Garvey's thought. On August 1, 1914, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA) in Jamaica with the objective of African redemption and economic development. He corresponded with Washington and visited the United States in 1916 to discover more about Tuskegee Institute. He soon traveled throughout the country and found that the condition of Afro-Americans resembled that of black people worldwide. In 1917, he started a UNIA branch in New York City. The UNIA experienced phenomenal growth in the United States reaching some 725 branches by 1926 in 38 states. In addition, there were 271 branches in 41 countries of Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Europe.[28]

The presence in New York City of national headquarters for the NAACP, the Urban League, and the UNIA, with their respective publications *Crisis, Opportunity,* and *Negro World,* made that metropolis, and in particular Harlem, the cultural and intellectual capital of Black America. During the 1920s, Harlem became the center of a "Negro Renaissance" in art, literature, drama, music, and dance. Alain Locke described the "Harlem Renaissance" as the product of the "New Negro," who shed "the psychology of imitation and implied inferiority."[29] Afro-Americans during the "Harlem Renaissance" consciously embraced their own culture and proclaimed it proudly to the world. According to Nathan Huggins, the "New Negro" was "militant and self-assertive."[30] He has also suggested that it was primarily because of their urbanity that Afro-Americans were able to trumpet with pride their folk culture in the spirituals, tales, blues, and jazz.[31]

The quest for cultural heritage led many Afro-Americans to Africa, with which they now identified more strongly than at any time since the 1830s. Sometimes that identification was ambivalent, as in Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage," with the question: "What is Africa to me?" Langston Hughes answered that query for himself in the poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," in which he wrote: "I've known rivers:/ Ancient dusky rivers./ My soul has grown deep like the rivers."[32] Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, Arthur A. Schomburg, and others saw the need for, in Schomburg's words, "the American Negro [to] remake his past in order to make his

future."[33] Schomburg observed that more systematic and scientific study of Afro-Americans had revealed that: black people historically had been active collaborators and often pioneers in the struggle for their own freedom and progress; black people of achievement were generally regarded as exceptional, were disassociated from the group, and thereby the race was deprived of distinction; the racial origins of black people provided a record of accomplishment, especially in the emergence and early development of world civilization. Schomburg spent much of his life gathering materials from around the world to demonstrate these points. His prodigious collection became the nucleus for the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Woodson together with four other black men organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in Chicago on September 9, 1915 and incorporated it in the District of Columbia a month later. The organization's purpose was to study, preserve, interpret, and disseminate scholarship on black people throughout the world but particularly in the United States. Toward that end, ASNLH started the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, organized annual meetings, launched Negro History Week in 1926, and started the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1936. Through the programs of ASNLH and his own books, Woodson earned the title "Father of Negro History."[34]

The "New Negro" movement, which opened the twentieth century with the composition of James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson's song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," peaked during the 1920s. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" quickly became known as the "Negro National Anthem," with the last three lines of its first stanza proclaiming "Facing the rising sun,/ Of our new day begun,/ Let us march on till victory is won."[35] That march for self-definition, cultural heritage, and racial equality fragmented during the Great Depression.

Afro-Americans, as the last hired and the first fired, that is, as America's reserve army of labor, felt the Depression sooner and suffered its effects longer than the rest of the country. In 1930, 56 percent of all Afro-Americans lived in rural areas and 40 percent of all black wage earners worked in agriculture, overwhelmingly in the South. There they lived in abject poverty, a condition worsened by the Depression. In fact, the Depression quickened black urbanization in the South, as more than 190,000 black tenant farmers were displaced during the 1930s. The New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), which paid farmers initially to destroy their cotton crop and later to reduce their acreage, intended the benefits to be shared with tenant farmers and sharecroppers. In practice, they did not receive their fair portion of AAA relief and were evicted from the land by the thousands as landowners discovered they could farm reduced acreage with less labor and keep their government allocation.

Moreover, large landowners began to mechanize work in the fields to yield higher profits. Black agricultural workers had little recourse but to leave the land. Responsibility for administering cotton reduction programs rested in local hands, but not one black farmer served on a county committee in the South.[36]

In the cities, Afro-Americans confronted similarly stark conditions during the Depression. Although they constituted 10 percent of the available workers in 1930, they formed 27 percent of the unemployed.[37] Black male unemployment ran between 40 and 60 percent in major industrial cities such as New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia.[38] It is small wonder that fewer Afro-Americans left the South for the North during the 1930s. Out-migration from 1930 to 1940 was less than half what it had been during the 1920s.[39] Some of the large northern cities even lost black residents. One-quarter of the migrants to Chicago, for example, returned South.[40] In the cities, Afro-Americans were three times more likely to be on relief rolls than whites. As marginal, unskilled workers, they were the first workers terminated during the early years of the Depression.[41]

Although New Deal relief, housing, and employment programs assisted a higher proportion of Afro-Americans than others, those programs had some long-term negative effects on black urban communities in particular. Housing projects built with government funds consolidated urban ghettos and intensified residential segregation. Local housing authorities segregated black and white residents, although the Public Works Administration officially opposed separate housing. One of the major weaknesses of New Deal programs for Afro-Americans was their local administration under general guidelines, but with little enforcement, especially for racial equality, by the federal government. This was the case with only a few exceptions. In employment, the government's emergency work programs actually depressed the job structure for Afro-Americans. On Works Projects Administration jobs, for example, Afro-Americans held unskilled positions at a higher percentage than before the Depression. In other words, federal work programs did very little to upgrade the occupational status of Afro-Americans. New Deal housing and employment programs in effect exacerbated existing problems.[42]

If the New Deal did not improve their material condition, relative to the rest of the nation, it did provide psychic comfort. Afro-Americans participated in government agencies on an unprecedented level. Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed over one hundred Afro-Americans to government posts, and the number of black federal employees tripled during the 1930s.[43] Although Roosevelt did little officially to meet their concerns about lynching, disfranchisement, segregation, and discrimination, the impression among the masses of black people was that they had a friend in the White House for the first time since Abraham Lincoln. The President's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, through words and deeds made civil rights an

important issue. She displayed a keen interest in Afro-American progress, worked closely with black leaders, and strongly advocated racial justice. When the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to rent their Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. in 1939 for a concert by Marian Anderson, Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the organization. She supported a public concert, although she did not attend it, at the Lincoln Memorial. The performance attracted seventy-five thousand Americans from all walks of life, including cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, senators, representatives, diplomats, and common laborers.[44]

Eleanor Roosevelt served as a conduit to the White House for black leaders, especially the Black Cabinet led by Mary McLeod Bethune. The Black Cabinet was an informal network of black advisors on the staffs of New Deal agencies and in government departments. Bethune, who headed the Division of Negro Affairs in the National Youth Administration, brought these black officials together to try to influence policies for the benefit of the black masses. She, of all Black Cabinet members, had personal access to the White House through her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt. Although the Black Cabinet scored few major victories, its mere presence symbolized black involvement in government.[45]

At issue for many historians has been the extent to which civil rights became an important cause during the New Deal and influenced the burgeoning black vote's shift from the Republican to the Democratic party. Afro-Americans faced several alternatives during the 1930s, i.e., protest, self-help, trade unionism, or communism.[46] The Communist party sought to organize Afro-Americans during the Depression as the most oppressed sector of American society. Initially, Communists supported the "Black Belt Thesis" under the influence of Garvey's mass appeal. They assumed that Afro-Americans favored the establishment of a black nation in the South where they would be free from white racial domination. The Communist party made the Scottsboro case a cause célèbre as an example of American racial injustice. The Scottsboro case resulted from the arrest and speedy conviction of nine black youths in 1931 for allegedly raping two white girls on a freight train in northern Alabama.[47] Around 1935, the Communist party adopted its "united front" strategy to cooperate with rather than confront both black as well as labor organizations. Communists participated in forming the National Negro Congress in 1936 as a coalition of black organizations to reach the black masses and to stimulate cooperation with organized labor.[48]

During the Depression, there was a split between "race men" and "radicals." The latter represented a new core of highly trained black intellectuals who analyzed Afro-Americans' plight more along class than race lines. They associated the problems of the black masses with those of the working class. The "radicals" believed in the need for organization but more on the basis of class than race. Most of them, such as E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, and Abram Harris, were university-trained social

scientists who thought that the ultimate fate of a minority was assimilation with the majority. Some "radicals," like the writer Richard Wright, joined the Communist party because of its open friendliness toward Afro-Americans and willingness to include them in the party's hierarchy. "Race men" such as Du Bois, Woodson, and Kelly Miler (dean at Howard University) advocated self-reliance to survive the Depression. Du Bois, for example, proposed a plan of black consumer cooperatives to build black business and improve the welfare of black people.[49]

Although the Communist party accorded them more dignity and respect than perhaps any other group of white people, Afro-Americans in the main rejected the Communists' appeal. When the Communist party dropped its "united front" tactic after the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact, A. Philip Randolph, who headed the National Negro Congress, resigned as president in 1940. In his resignation speech, Randolph warned that the Communists did not really understand the condition of Afro-Americans and were more concerned with their own interests.[50] Afro-Americans in large measure rejected the Communist and self-help alternatives for protest, trade unionism, and the Democratic party.

The Wagner-Connery Act, which Roosevelt signed into law in 1935, guaranteed workers the right to organize and increased unionization. The withdrawal of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) that same year brought large numbers of Afro-Americans into the labor movement. The CIO organized workers by industry rather than by skill as did the AFL. Although tension had existed between black and white workers because industry often used Afro-Americans as strikebreakers, the CIO made a strong effort to include Afro-Americans in the union movement. Black workers played important roles in the unionization of the steel and automotive industries by the CIO.[51]

Given the economic benefit of New Deal programs, Afro-Americans turned increasingly to political organization and support for the Democratic party. Their politicization and continued urbanization made the black vote increasingly important to the Democrats, especially in the North. By 1936, Afro-Americans moved overwhelmingly into the Democratic column for the first time. According to Nancy Weiss, they voted for the person, Roosevelt, more than for the party, despite "the New Deal's lack of a substantive record on race...."[52] Harvard Sitkoff, however, has suggested that "the New Deal years [were] a turning point in race relations trends." He contends that black expectations rose during the 1930s, black powerlessness decreased, and white hostility declined. Both substantively and symbolically, for Sitkoff, the federal government assisted Afro-Americans in an unprecedented fashion. And the "Negro problem" became part of the federal agenda for the first time since Reconstruction.[53]

Although historians will probably continue to debate the merits of the New Deal for Afro-Americans, the Second World War marked a watershed in Afro-American history. By the war's end, the majority of the black population lived in urban areas.[54] During the 1940s, more than a million and a half Afro-Americans left the South for cities of the North and West Coast. This decade witnessed the largest out-migration of the black population ever from the South.[55] Unlike during the First World War, when Afro-Americans agreed by and large to put their grievances behind them and join the struggle to "Make the World Safe for Democracy," they now determined to wage a "Double V" campaign for victory abroad and at home.[56]

Black men and women again answered their country's call and more than a million entered the military during the war. Once more, they faced segregation and assignment primarily to labor details. There were significant changes, however, in that Afro-Americans entered the air force for the first time, became commissioned officers in the navy, and even were able to join the marines. The army, moreover, integrated its officer candidate schools except those training air force pilots. Still, the number of black commissioned officers was extremely low, less than 1 percent. Contrary to its instructions to the French during World War I, the military issued a pamphlet, "Command of Negro Troops," that challenged theories of racial inferiority. Toward the end of the European campaign, some black platoons were assigned to white units. The first black flying unit, the Ninety-ninth Pursuit Squadron, escorted U.S. bombers on missions and could boast that, of more than two hundred missions, they did not lose a single bomber to the enemy. Although sixteen black men won the Congressional Medal of Honor after the Civil War, when it was first awarded, fourteen in the Indian wars, and five in the Spanish-American War, not a single black man received such recognition in either world war, and not for lack of heroism in combat.[57]

During the Second World War, the "Negro Problem" became more of a national than a regional issue. In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish political economist, published his massive two-volume study *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. He undertook the study for the Carnegie Corporation, a philanthropy, in 1937 to place the "Negro Problem" in the context of American society. His work emphasized the gap between America's creed of equality and practice of racial discrimination.[58] Many American leaders anticipated potential social disruption after World War II similar to the Red Summer of 1919. They did not have to wait until the war ended, as violence erupted in Detroit, Harlem, Los Angeles, and Beaumont, Texas. During the summer of 1943, there were several racial brawls in Detroit before the major outbreak on June 20 at an amusement park, Belle Isle, in the Detroit River. The riot spread to the city where 25 Afro-Americans and 9 whites lost their lives, with 675 persons injured.[59] In Harlem on August 1, a riot ensued after

rumor spread that a white patrolman had shot and killed a black soldier in uniform trying to protect his mother. This riot differed from previous disorders in that it did not pit one race against the other but involved the growing issue of police brutality. Harlemites wreaked vengeance on property, not persons. Some 1,450 stores suffered damages and losses due to looting, estimated as high as $5 million. Six persons, all black, were killed during the riot, a harbinger of ghetto revolt during the 1960s.[60]

Some commentators and black leaders blamed the outbreak of violence in 1943 on A. Philip Randolph's mobilization of the black masses in the March on Washington Movement (MOWM). Randolph threatened in January 1941 to lead ten thousand Afro-Americans (later increased to fifty thousand) in a march on Washington, D.C. to secure fair employment in defense industries and nondiscrimination in the armed forces. To forestall the demonstration scheduled for July 1, President Roosevelt, on June 25, issued Executive Order 8802 to establish a Fair Employment Practices Committee. Although Randolph called off the march, the MOWM continued in existence to monitor progress in employment. To maintain momentum, the MOWM staged rallies in major northern cities. Some eighteen thousand black people packed Madison Square Garden for the New York rally, the largest gathering there since Garvey's First International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World in 1920. The MOWM dissolved for all practical purposes by 1944 after the organization toned down its mass mobilization campaign following the 1943 riots.[61] The MOWM, however, foreshadowed the goals, tactics, and strategies of the civil rights movement.[62]

The Second World War, according to Richard Dalfiume, prompted Afro-Americans to focus greater attention on their status in the United States. For example, the NAACP experienced massive growth from 355 branches and some 50,000 members in 1940 to 1,073 branches and about 450,000 members in 1946.[63] In 1944, the Supreme Court struck down the white primary, a device tht curtailed black political participation in the South by confining Democratic party primaries to white voters only.[64] Barely 150,000 southern Afro-Americans were registered to vote in 1940, a figure that zoomed to more than a million by 1952.[65] At the close of World War II, Afro-Americans throughout the nation were resolute about gaining their full civil rights.

The urbanization of Black America had reached full proportion by the end of World War II. Migration unleashed by World War I became a flood tide during the Second World War. In cities of the South and North, agricultural workers were transformed into industrial workers, albeit at the bottom of the scale as unskilled, semi-skilled, and domestic laborers. The "New Negro" of the 1920s assumed greater militancy during the 1940s and set the stage for the next transition from segregation to civil rights.

SEGREGATION TO CIVIL RIGHTS

At the end of World War II, Afro-Americans stood poised to challenge racial segregation in the United States. The transition from segregation to civil rights reached a turning point in 1954 when NAACP lawyers convinced the Supreme Court to reverse the doctrine of "separate but equal." The civil rights movement corresponded with the decolonization of nonwhite peoples throughout the world, influenced their struggles, and drew encouragement from them. In the United States, the black freedom movement was a "wedge" that broadened the concept of American democracy. The transition from segregation to civil rights peaked with the legislative victories of the 1960s. Although Afro-Americans made great strides in dismantling segregation and in achieving new pride and racial consciousness, they were not able to transform their socioeconomic status and to secure full equality with White Americans.

During the Second World War, Walter White, NAACP Executive Secretary, wrote that Afro-Americans had developed "...a sense of kinship with other colored—and also oppressed—peoples of the world." He concluded that "a wind *is* rising—a wind of determination by the have-nots of the world to share the benefits of freedom and prosperity which the haves of the earth have tried to keep exclusively for themselves."[1] Each of the major Afro-American organizations (NAACP, National Urban League, National Negro Congress, National Council of Negro Women, and March on Washington Movement) attacked colonialism, supported self-determination, and compared the status of Afro-Americans to that of colonized peoples. One of the most significant casualties of World War II was the idea of white supremacy.[2]

At a National Conference of Negro Leaders meeting in Washington, D.C., June 23, 1945, representatives of some thirty organizations, with a combined membership of more than eight million, discussed the future of Black America. Mary McLeod Bethune, in opening remarks, characterized Afro-Americans, despite some progress, as a subject people, "...men and women with little more than a colonial status in a democracy."[3] The conference anticipated that black soldiers were likely to become victims of vicious attacks when they returned home. Moreover, black workers stood to lose jobs in adjustment to a peacetime economy. The meeting urged passage of federal anti-poll tax legislation, enforcement of laws to protect civil rights (especially the right to vote), desegregation of the armed services, a national policy of full employment, improvement in educational opportunity as well as in health and housing, and a

nondiscriminatory government policy in veterans' benefits, public education, housing, and employment.[4]

It was not long before the fears of the National Conference of Negro Leaders came true. In early 1946, the chief of police in Batesburgh, South Carolina struck and blinded a recently discharged black soldier, still in uniform, after an alleged argument with a white bus driver. The Ku Klux Klan near Monroe, Georgia killed two black soldiers and their wives. These were but a few of the violent attacks, especially against black veterans who sought their rights but met southern whites determined to "keep them in their place." Such brutality against black men who had just defended their country in battle shocked and outraged many Americans, black and white. They pressed President Harry S. Truman for federal action, since southern local and state officials did little or nothing to protect Afro-Americans against terrorism.[5] On December 5, 1946, President Truman appointed a Committee on Civil Rights, which issued its report, *To Secure These Rights*, almost a year later.

Thurgood Marshall, NAACP chief counsel, lauded the report "...as one of the most important documents yet produced in this field [civil rights]."[6] It called for a permanent Commission on Civil Rights, a Fair Employment Practices Act, antilynching legislation, elimination of the poll tax, and action to end segregation in education, the military, housing, health care, and public services. The report was especially critical of racial segregation in the nation's capital, "...a graphic illustration of a failure of democracy." This was one place where the federal government could make immediate change because of its jurisdiction over the District of Columbia.[7]

Although *To Secure These Rights* acknowledged the major areas of racial inequality, underscored the concerns of black leaders, and offered specific remedies, more than two decades would elapse before the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government would implement most of its recommendations and then only after incessant pressure. For example, A. Philip Randolph threatened massive civil disobedience in the nation's capital before President Truman issued Executive Order #9981, July 26, 1948, to desegregate the armed services.[8] And it took six years to complete the process, which was accelerated during the Korean War (1950-53), in which black soldiers suffered a casualty rate twice that of white soldiers.[9]

The civil rights drive intensified as recent black migrants to the cities of the North and South became more of a political force. The number of black registered voters in the South more than tripled from 1940 to 1947, rising from about 168,888 to 585,155. Still, more than 80 percent of those Afro-Americans eligible to vote remained unregistered due primarily to white southern resistance that grew even stronger after 1948.[10] But the northern black vote proved pivotal in the 1948 presidential race. With

President Truman flanked on the left by Henry A. Wallace's Progressive party and on the right by the Dixiecrats, his margin of victory over Republican Thomas E. Dewey came from black votes in key northern states. Truman's narrow victory further ensconced black voters in the Democratic party, although they did not nestle there until after the 1964 election.[11]

The rising tide of black political influence coupled with important NAACP court victories stiffened southern white opposition to civil rights. Three key decisions handed down by the Supreme Court on June 5, 1950 shook the edifice of racial segregation. In *Sweatt v. Painter, McLaurin v. Oklahoma,* and *Henderson v. U.S.,* the Court held that separate facilities had to be truly equal, and that if separate facilities were not provided, whether in graduate education or in railway dining cars, there should be no restrictions on access to those facilities. The NAACP was well on its way to uprooting the doctrine of "separate but equal," which it accomplished in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* Supreme Court ruling.[12] Its success, however, especially in school desegregation, triggered attempts to quash the NAACP in the South. From 1950 to 1959, several southern states tried to destroy the NAACP. By 1957, it faced litigation over its very right to exist in nine southern states. Membership plummeted from 128,716 to 79,677, and it lost 246 branches in the South.[13]

Aldon D. Morris has suggested that crippling the NAACP contributed to the emergence of the modern civil rights movement. Weakening the NAACP broke its hegemony over civil rights strategy and opened the way for tactics other than legal redress. Moreover, local issues gained prominence over national goals formulated at NAACP headquarters in New York City. Indigenous groups arose to address local concerns.[14]

The segregated city bus was the one place where large numbers of southern blacks and whites performed the rituals of Jim Crow each work day. Afro-Americans in large measure might try to avoid direct confrontation with segregation, but could not elude it on the buses. Jim Crow stared them in the face each morning on the way to work, to school, or to shop and on the return home. Only those Afro-Americans who could afford automobiles might escape its humiliation. Although they generally constituted most of the passengers, Afro-Americans often found themselves standing over empty seats reserved for whites. That was the case in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, scene of the first bus boycott of the 1950s.[15] In Montgomery, Alabama, black passengers paid their fares at the front of the bus, stepped outside, and boarded again at the rear entrance.[16]

Although the Baton Rouge protest provided the prototype for the bus boycott, especially in the use of car pools, it lasted only a week before an agreement was reached.[17] The Montgomery bus boycott, which persisted for almost a year, attracted national attention.[18] Moreover, it thrust into

prominence a charismatic leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., who came to symbolize the civil rights movement. But King did not initiate the Montgomery bus boycott, just as he did not create the civil rights movement, although he became its most representative spokesman. As V. P. Franklin has illustrated in his study of black self-determination, resistance has been a "core value" of Afro-Americans.[19]

When Rosa Parks refused to yield her seat to a white passenger in Montgomery on December 1, 1955, she did not act spontaneously or mindlessly. Her defiance of Jim Crow was firmly rooted in the tradition of resistance. She was secretary of the local NAACP chapter and had defied segregation ordinances on Montgomery buses several times in the 1940s. Indeed, the Women's Political Council (WPC), an organization of black professional women, had pressed the city government in 1954 to end some of the more blatantly discriminatory practices on municipal buses. The WPC took the lead in mobilizing Montgomery Afro-Americans for the bus boycott. The work of sustaining the boycott became the responsibility of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which selected King as its president.[20]

After Montgomery, Afro-Americans throughout the South organized to end Jim Crow bus policies, fortified in part by the Supreme Court decision of November 13, 1956 which ruled Alabama's segregated bus laws unconstitutional. To coordinate those protests, King and other local black leaders, primarily ministers, met in Atlanta, Georgia in early January 1957 to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).[21] SCLC with King as its president reflected the black church's central role in the civil rights movement. All of SCLC's nine officers, except its historian, were ministers. Of its sixteen other board members, who represented eleven southern states, only three were not clergymen. The black church as well as the black college were the most viable institutions for Afro-Americans in the South. The church in particular provided a haven from racial domination, especially in southern cities. The church embraced a mass base, a leadership cadre, and financial resources that could be directed toward change.[22]

It is extremely important to understand, in Aldon Morris's words, that there was not "...one homogeneous civil rights movement, [but]... dozens of local movements with their own organizations, activists, interorganizational relationships, boundaries, and funding bases. This fact tends to be obscured by the names of famous activists, organizations, and abstract concepts." The movement's binding force in large measure was black church culture, which brought together diverse elements of Afro-American communities.[23] "Freedom songs" rooted in black spiritual and gospel music galvanized demonstrators, fortified them, and brought them through trying moments. "We Shall Overcome," the movement's anthem, became the rallying cry for freedom struggles in the United States and around the world. As Wyatt Tee Walker, SCLC executive director, has

observed: "The strength of the movement was mobilized and programmed through the instrumentality of Black sacred music."[24]

Congress in 1957 enacted the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. While the statute was before Congress, some 27,000 civil rights protestors gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in a "Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom." King electrified the crowd as he would do at the same spot six years later but before a much larger audience. In 1957, he rose to oratorical heights with the refrain: "Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the Federal Government about our basic rights. Give us the ballot...." The Civil Rights Act of 1957 empowered the federal government through the Justice Department to bring lawsuits against denial of voting rights. It also finally established a Civil Rights Commission to monitor violations and to propose remedies.[25]

With legislation to help Afro-Americans secure the ballot, SCLC launched its first major campaign, Crusade for Citizenship. SCLC decided that the vote was central to school desegregation, employment opportunity, decent housing, and equal access to public accommodations and transportation. Its goal was to double the number of black registered voters in the South. SCLC did not achieve that objective, as southern white racists used delaying tactics, economic reprisals, gerrymandering, and other devices to skirt enforcement of the 1957 legislation.[26] It would require more years of struggle, several additional civil rights bills, and a constitutional amendment to enfranchise Afro-Americans in the South.

The civil rights movement gained fresh momentum in 1960 and 1961 with the growth of sit-ins and freedom rides. Those activities marked the determination of black youth in particular to enjoy the full benefits of American citizenship. Organized labor introduced the sit-in, or sit-down strike, during the 1930s in unionizing the automobile industry. The four black college students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, a black school, who "sat-in" at the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960, acted within the tradition of civil disobedience. Their resistance, however, sparked a national reaction to segregated facilities. There had been sit-ins in at least sixteen cities between 1957 and 1960 to desegregate lunch counters. The Greensboro sit-in generated national news headlines that influenced black students across the South to conduct similar demonstrations.[27]

In mid-April 1960, black college students met in Raleigh, North Carolina at Shaw University, a historically black college, to establish an organization for student activists. Ella Baker, former NAACP field secretary and SCLC executive director, organized the meeting. Out of it emerged the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to "attack racism in all its dimensions," according to Clayborne Carson. At

the Raleigh conference, James Lawson, a theology student, declared: "All of Africa will be free before the American Negro attains first-class citizenship." Black students were keenly aware of the African independence struggle and were determined not to be left behind in the global movement for self-determination.[28]

On May 4, 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) sent two teams of volunteers, black and white, from Washington, D.C. to test segregation in interstate transportation and at bus terminals. CORE, formed in Chicago in 1942, had made a "Journey of Reconciliation" in 1947 to check compliance with the Supreme Court's 1946 ruling in *Morgan v. Virginia* against segregation in interstate transportation. That demonstration failed to achieve desegregation because southern states insisted that their segregation laws governed intrastate travel. The challenge did provide a model, however, for the 1961 freedom rides. CORE, the most interracial of 1960s civil rights organizations, was dedicated to interracial cooperation and Gandhian principles of nonviolent direct action. Initially, it fought discrimination in northern schools, hospitals, housing, and public accommodations.[29]

The freedom riders encountered little difficulty until they reached Rock Hill, South Carolina, where a mob severely beat John Lewis, later chairman of SNCC, and Albert Bigelow, a white architect. The demonstration continued through Georgia to Alabama, where at Anniston a racist crowd assaulted the Greyhound bus and burned it. When the second group of freedom riders reached Birmingham on a Trailways bus, a mob attacked and seriously injured several demonstrators. SNCC volunteers continued the freedom ride into Mississippi. Soon, CORE, SCLC, and SNCC joined forces to conduct more freedom rides. Volunteers from across the country, almost half of them white, answered the call to challenge segregation in transportation.[30]

The administration of President John F. Kennedy, embarrassed by the freedom rides, racial tension, and adverse publicity especially in emerging third world nations, sought to persuade civil rights activists to focus their attention on voter registration. In 1960, Congress had passed a Civil Rights Act whereby federal courts could appoint referees to guarantee that qualified applicants were registered to vote. Voter registration, in the Kennedy administration's view, would not cause such violent white opposition, would forge a national consensus on civil rights, and would aid President Kennedy's reelection bid. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, at a June 16, 1961 meeting with civil rights leaders, promised federal protection and financial support for a voter registration drive.[31] CORE, NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and the Urban League combined in 1962 for a Voter Education Project (VEP). Two years later, the VEP had registered 688,800 Afro-Americans, primarily in the urban and Upper South but had barely touched the rural and Deep South.[32]

The approaching centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation

spawned the slogan "Free by '63." Moreover, by 1963, thirty-four African nations had gained independence as had Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. It appeared as if Afro-Americans might lag behind in the struggle for freedom.[33] That point was hammered home with increasing clarity by Malcolm X, who contended that if Afro-Americans were really citizens of the United States, there would be no need for legislation to grant them their rights. He argued:

> . . . the so-called Negro in America, a hundred years after Lincoln issued the so-called Emancipation Proclamation, is still knocking on the White House door and still begging practically every white politician who is running for office to pass legislation to bring about an opportunity for the so-called Negro in America to be recognized as a human being—not as a citizen, but as a human being. They can't get recognition as human beings, much less as citizens.[34]

Malcolm X, as national spokesman for the Nation of Islam, was one of the most eloquent critics of American racial injustice.

Demonstrations flared in more than 186 cities across the South in 1963. SCLC's Birmingham campaign attracted the most notice with vivid pictures on television and in newspapers of dogs and firehoses being used against civil rights marchers. Birmingham proved how mass disruption could be applied to achieve civil rights objectives. SCLC staged marches, pickets, boycotts, and sit-ins to disrupt the city's normal activities. Thousands of demonstrators, including young children, were arrested and jailed.[35] King went to jail Easter Sunday and several days later penned his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," one of the most important documents of the Civil Rights era. That message, in response to white Birmingham clergymen who counseled patience and a halt to demonstrations, accented Afro-Americans' resolve to gain "Freedom Now." King wrote in part:

> We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was 'well-timed' in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!' It rings in the ears of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.'

He noted that Afro-Americans had waited more than 340 years for their "constitutional and God-given rights." While they moved at a "horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter," nations in Asia and Africa were "moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence."[36]

The 1963 demonstrations culminated in the March on Washington, on August 28. More than a quarter million Americans, black and white, crowded the park around Lincoln's Memorial to urge Congress to pass legislation that once and for all would end racial segregation in the United

States. A. Philip Randolph, who had threatened a similar protest in 1941, wanted the demonstration to emphasize "Jobs and Freedom." He urged civil disobedience to dramatize black unemployment and to secure "economic justice." In negotiations with the White House for the march, emphasis shifted from jobs to freedom and from civil disobedience to a mass rally.[37] The nation, if not indeed the world, riveted its attention on Washington, D.C. that hot summer day. King's "I Have a Dream" speech invoked the promise of American democracy and struck sensitive chords against the denial of full citizenship.

Although the summer of 1963 generated fresh momentum for the civil rights movement, it came at a price. On June 11, Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, was shot and killed in the driveway to his home by a white sniper. In Birmingham, on Sunday morning, September 15, dynamite rocked the Sixteenth Street Baptist Chuch, a staging ground for the summer rallies and marches, and snuffed out the lives of four young black girls preparing for church services.[38] Many Afro-Americans linked John F. Kennedy's assassination, November 22, to their struggle, as they considered him a friend of their cause, alongside Lincoln and FDR.[39]

With passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in sight, SNCC initiated its Mississippi Summer Project to enfranchise Afro-Americans in the most racist state in the nation. The 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination in public accommodations, prohibited use of federal funds for public programs that permitted racial segregation, barred discrimination by unions and employers, established an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and sought to aid school desegregation.[40] SNCC invited hundreds of white students to Mississippi for the project, assuming that the nation would not tolerate the type of violence against them that SNCC workers faced as a matter of course. Organizers planned to register voters in a newly created Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and to challenge the regular party at the Democratic National Convention. SNCC also established "freedom schools" to educate Afro-Americans in Mississippi about their condition and the potential for change.[41]

Although SNCC succeeded in registering only 1,600 black voters at Mississippi courthouses, with more than ten times as many prospective voters turned away, it did enroll more than 80,000 voters in the MFDP. SNCC also lost three volunteers—Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, white students from New York City, and James Chaney, a young black resident of Mississippi—who were murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi.[42] At the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the MFDP hoped to be seated as delegates because they were more representative than the all-white regular delegation. Fannie Lou Hamer, a resident of Ruleville, Mississippi and an example of Afro-American courage and resistance, helped present the MFDP's case before

the Credentials Committee. She had lost her job of eighteen years on a cotton plantation for registering to vote and was brutally beaten for trying to register other Afro-Americans in rural Mississippi.[43] The Credentials Committee refused to seat the MFDP but offered a compromise of two at-large seats with the rest of the delegation designated as guests of the convention. The MFDP, although it received tremendous pressure from politicians, civil rights leaders, and union officials, rejected the compromise. That experience of playing by the rules and seeking to be part of the system but being still locked out was the last straw for many SNCC activists, who concluded that Afro-Americans must possess real power to effect changes in their lives.[44]

The struggle for the ballot reached new heights with SCLC's Selma, Alabama campaign in early 1965. According to David Garrow, the Selma campaign was the most legitimate of all civil rights drives in the eyes of the American public because it emphasized the fundamental right of citizenship, the right to vote. The demonstrators, however, were not able to register large numbers of voters and were brutally attacked when they sought to stage a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital, on Sunday, March 7. The assault provoked sympathy across the country, as thousands marched in their hometowns to support the demonstrators. President Lyndon B. Johnson went on national television on March 15 to announce introduction of tough voting rights legislation to Congress. The demonstrators succeeded in marching from Selma to Montgomery but only under the protection of federal troops. Once more, the toll in human life was high. Jimmie Lee Jackson, a black youngster, was killed during the early stages of the campaign; the Reverend James Reeb, a white minister from Boston, was slain after the aborted march, and Viola Liuzzo, a white Detroit housewife, was shot and killed the evening of the successful march while transporting marchers back to Selma.[45]

The Twenty-fourth Amendment, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Civil Rights Act of 1968 mark a watershed in the transition from segregation to civil rights. The Twenty-fourth Amendment, ratified in 1964, prohibited use of the poll tax as a requirement for voting in national elections. The Voting Rights Act eliminated literacy tests and other devices used to prevent Afro-Americans from registering to vote. Moreover, it enabled federal officials to supervise registration of black voters in areas that had denied large numbers of them the right to vote. By 1969, for the first time since Reconstruction, more than half of the eligible black voters in the South were registered to vote.[46] The Civil Rights Act of 1968, enacted after the assassination of King, barred discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.[47] The basic rights of citizenship for Afro-Americans were now defined in law. Legally, Afro-Americans had achieved first-class citizenship.

Although Afro-Americans in the South had made much progress by the mid-1960s, at least in ending segregation, their northern cousins had not experienced much change in their lives. They had assisted the southern struggle with sympathy marches and rallies, financial contributions, and support committees. But for most Afro-Americans in the North, the "Negro Revolution" had not substantially altered their lives in the manner that desegregation brought new dignity and respect for their southern cousins. Just as the bus was the most vivid symbol of racial oppression in the South, police brutality was its counterpart in the North. Locked into ghettos that had become slums with poor housing, inadequate recreational facilities, high unemployment, and few public services, northern Afro-Americans rebelled in the mid-1960s with unprecedented violence. From 1964 to 1968, there were some 329 riots in 257 cities across the nation.[48] In the worst outbreaks—Harlem, 1964; Watts, 1965; Newark, 1967; and Detroit, 1967—the precipitant was the "routine arrests of Negroes for minor offenses by white police." The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, in a survey of attitudes held by residents in riot cities, reported that police practices were the major grievance followed by unemployment and inadequate housing.[49]

In a conclusion that startled many Americans, the National Advisory Commission revealed: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."[50] That conclusion was drawn after exhaustive study of the history and status of Afro-Americans and despite the legislation, executive orders, and court rulings of the era often referred to as the "Second Reconstruction."

For many Afro-Americans, it was clear that much more was required than the legal definition of their status as American citizens. The concept of Black Power, although fraught with controversy, became an imperative for many Afro-Americans. SNCC field workers in the South sought to empower Afro-Americans in isolated rural areas, while the Black Panther party, which considered itself the heir of Malcolm X, who was assassinated in 1965, worked to empower Afro-Americans in northern ghettos. Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton defined "Black Power" as:

> . . . a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community . . . to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations . . . to reject the racist institutions and values of this society. The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks* (emphasis in the original).[51]

Afro-Americans expressed Black Power in numerous ways from creating black caucuses in religious, professional, and political organizations to adopting handshakes, hairstyles, and African dress. Black writers, poets, artists, and musicians fostered Black Consciousness in their work. The "Black Arts Movement," according to Larry Neal, linked "in a highly conscious manner, art and politics in order to assist in the liberation of

Black people."[52] Vincent Harding has written that the black freedom movement was a "wedge" that pried open consciousness not only for Afro-Americans but for white students, poor whites, Chicanos, native Americans, Puerto Ricans, women, gay people, consumers, environmentalists, and the elderly. White student leaders, in particular, who protested the war in Vietnam gained much of their early protest experience from the civil rights movement.[53]

The Vietnam War placed a heavier burden on black servicemen than did any previous American war. In 1967, for example, 64 percent of eligible Afro-Americans were drafted, compared with only 31 percent of eligible whites. Black men were assigned to infantry units at twice the rate of white men and suffered almost a quarter of the casualties throughout the war.[54]

While waging war in Vietnam, the United States also tried to combat poverty at home. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 held the promise of improving the socioeconomic status of Afro-Americans. Food stamps, Medicaid, housing subsidies, school lunch programs, manpower training, and Head Start, among other forms of government assistance, began to reduce poverty, unemployment, and general disadvantage for Afro-Americans. Affirmative action helped to improve educational opportunities and occupational distribution for Afro-Americans. The American economy, however, suffered strain in supporting the costs for both "guns and butter." And in the end, "guns" prevailed.[55]

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, public policy analysts began to debate the effects of the black freedom struggle and government programs. William J. Wilson suggested that the civil rights movement reflected the needs and interests of the black middle class, that it did not address the specific problems of the black underclass, and that the continued subordination of Afro-Americans stems more from class than race variables. Some conservative economists, most notably Thomas Sowell, theorized that government programs and regulations hindered rather than helped black progress. Allied with these assessments is the view that some Afro-Americans made sizeable gains over the past twenty years, while a huge underclass remained mired in poverty and the social-class gap widened among Afro-Americans.[56]

Reynolds Farley, in a study based on 1980 census data, reports that although Afro-Americans made much absolute progress since 1960, with the expansion of opportunity for the society as a whole, they did not make much progress relative to White Americans. Afro-Americans narrowed the gap in education as well as in occupational distribution for those Afro-Americans with jobs. Unemployment widened, however, as the unemployment rate for nonwhite men in the early 1980s was 118 percent higher than for white men, whereas it had been 76 percent higher in the 1950s. For nonwhite women, the comparable figures were 90 percent and 60 percent.

Farley discovered that residential segregation changed little from 1970 to 1980. The proportion of Afro-Americans in poverty declined from 55 percent of the black population in 1959 to 32 percent in 1969 but rose to 36 percent in 1982. Afro-Americans, especially in female-headed households, were three times more likely to be impoverished than whites. For husband-wife families, whites had $2,500 more per person to spend in both 1959 and 1980, a gap that has remained constant. Farley's most telling finding is:

> . . . if the rate of change for blacks exceeds that for whites, racial parity will be eventually reached. But achieving this goal may take a long time. In the example of family income, if the growth rates of 1959-1982 persist without interruption, *the median incomes of black and white families in the United States will be equal in about three centuries* [emphasis added].[5]

The transition from segregation to civil rights, which began after World War II, reached a turning point in 1954 with the *Brown* Supreme Court decision, and a watershed in the mid-1960s, when the citizenship rights of Afro-Americans were written into law. On paper, there had been a transformation from second-class to first-class citizenship. In practice, however, the struggle to enjoy the fruits of first-class citizenship remained. Perhaps the future holds a transition for Afro-Americans from impoverishment to prosperity and a transformation into truly equal Americans.

NOTES

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